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Preface

As Green River Community College continues to grow and touch the lives of thousands of students each year, the importance of providing an education tailored to the needs of our diverse community has never been more apparent. Since our founding nearly 50 years ago, Green River continues to work to provide all students a well-rounded education so they may leave better prepared for their next endeavor.

We are fortunate to be able to provide outstanding educational services to our community. With campuses in Auburn, Kent and Enumclaw, Washington, Green River is known for its responsiveness to students and community members. We work closely with our students who want to transfer to a four-year university, preparing them for the rigors of the higher levels of education while providing the services they need to successfully transfer. We partner with area employers to identify needs, develop programs that will help train students for work in those fields and facilitate connections between employer and student. Finally, we provide opportunities for high school students looking to graduate from area schools with their diploma and an associate’s degree, for students returning to school to earn their GED or learn the skills necessary for daily living and for the life-long learners who want to try something new. The result to the region is an average annual added income of $349.5 million from the activities of Green River and its former students, according to a March 2011 study of the college’s economic impact conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists Int.

Our environment is rapidly changing providing new challenges and opportunities. Economically, we have sustained a 28 percent loss of state funding since 2008. We are now working to diversify our funding streams to mitigate areas affected by recurring budget cuts.

Regionally our service area is becoming more diverse. The Seattle Times reported in February 2012 that more than 100 different languages are spoken in South King County schools. Green River is an educational choice for many of those students, and we must be prepared to meet their needs to ensure their success and the growth of our entire region.

As we begin our strategic planning process, assessing the external and internal environment is crucial in order to develop a focused direction for Green River. These key factors must be clearly identified and incorporated into our strategic plan. This environmental scan represents our first step in the strategic planning and assessment process and will provide the roadmap to develop a comprehensive vision to enhance and expand our programs and services for the next seven years and beyond.

There is no doubt of the profound affect Green River has on our community. We are thankful for the support and involvement of representatives of the college and community served by the college in collectively developing this report. Their hard work and dedication in identifying, collecting and analyzing data into this comprehensive report was invaluable to the strategic planning and assessment process.

Eileen Ely, President, Green River Community College
Note of Transmittal

Individuals who participated in development of the Environmental Scan Report did so with enthusiasm and commitment to the scanning process as an important precursor to initiating the Strategic Planning and Assessment process for Green River. Besides providing guidance on the focus and process for the environmental scan, several of the committee members were directly involved in collecting, analyzing, and summarizing data in the form of Environmental Scan Summaries which are part of this report. The results of the environmental scanning process conducted over the past four months, including systematic attention to both the internal and external context of Green River is intended to provide a foundation for the strategic planning and assessment process and continually improve the quality of Green River Community College.
Environmental Scanning Process

This section of the report addresses the purpose of the environmental scan and the process used to do the scanning, including participants, charge, major activities and timeline.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this project was to develop an Environmental Scan\(^1\) that would provide an information base for the strategic planning and assessment for Green River Community College (GRCC) with attention to both the college’s internal and external context. It includes the elements of identifying, prioritizing, collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and reporting the environmental information important to the planning and assessment process. In the context of higher education, strategic planning and assessment typically addresses the elements of mission, vision, values, core themes, objectives, indicators of assessment, overarching strategies or goals and initiating actions. These are the areas of use intended for the results of this environmental scan.

Involvement

The environmental scanning process was accomplished through involvement of representatives of the college and community served by GRCC. The following individuals and groups were involved in the environmental scanning process.

College President and Executive Director of Public Information

Dr. Eileen Ely, President of GRCC and John Ramsey, Executive Director of Public Information served as primary contacts for the Project Director in setting expectations, deciding involvements and guiding development of the environmental scan report.

Environmental Scan Advisory Committee

The Environmental Scan process was guided by an Environmental Scan Advisory Committee composed of 18 individuals selected by the President of GRCC and Executive Director of Public Information with input by college administrators and the Project Director. This committee advised on identifying, prioritizing, collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and reporting of information addressed by the environmental scan. Several committee members took responsibility for directly securing, reviewing,

\(^1\)Environmental scanning focuses on the context of an organization in multiple dimensions including: (1) Past, present, and future; (2) Internal and external context; (3) Local, regional, state, national, and global; (4) social, economic, technological, and political; (5) various organizational stakeholders; (6) short, medium, and long term time frame; (6) critical trends, directions, developments, issues, events, and assumptions. The scanning process refers to functioning as: (1) a radar system for the organization, (2) active signaling and alerting to signs of change, signal events, research findings, and forecasts of experts, (3) a future orientation that is anticipatory and surprise free; (4) systematically done; (5) identifies the major or most important factors to consider; (6) resulting in a strategic intelligence; (7) providing a broad look with diverse sources; (8) involving assessing, monitoring, and forecasting; (9) being done on an irregular (as needed), periodic, and continuous basis; and (10) providing products in the form of abstracts, summaries, and syntheses.
analyzing and summarizing data sources included in the environmental scan. The committee members were selected based on their knowledge of the college’s context and information needed and available both internal and external to the college. The Environmental Scan Advisory Committee met four times to work through each of the scanning steps, make recommendations for information to be included and the data collection process, and reviewing the first draft of the Environmental Scan Report. Members of the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee were as follows:

- Mark Blaisdell, Economics Instructor, GRCC
- Catherine Cantrell, Adult Basic Education Instructor, GRCC
- Deb Casey, Vice President of Student Services, GRCC
- Fia Eliasson-Creek, Director of Research and Planning, GRCC
- Eileen Ely, President, GRCC
- Krista Fox, Dean of Professional Technical and Workforce Education, GRCC
- Sherry Gates, Trustee, GRCC
- Joyce Hammer, Dean of Transfer Education, GRCC
- John Holman, Auburn City Council
- Debbie Knipschield, Director of Business Services, GRCC
- David Larsen, Student Services, GRCC
- Tonya McCabe, Business Instructor, GRCC
- Camella Morgan, Executive Director of Information Technology, GRCC
- Lynn Norman, Foundation Board Member, GRCC
- John Ramsey, Executive Director of Public Information, GRCC (Chair)
- Edward Lee Vargas, Superintendent, Kent School District
- Nancy Wyatt, Chief Operating Officer, Auburn Chamber of Commerce
- George Copa, Consultant, New Designs for Learning

**Environmental Scan Steering Committee**

From among the Environmental Scanning Advisory Committee, a Steering Committee was selected by the GRCC President to provide advice and direction to the scanning process. The Steering Committee met before and after each of the Environmental Scanning Advisory Committee meetings to review the results of the previous meeting and to plan the next meeting or other steps. These meetings were conducted via telephone conference calls with the project director. The Steering Committee served as a small executive team to ensure that the scanning process worked effectively by making suggestions and reviewing the agenda and results for each of the larger Environmental Scanning Advisory Committee meetings.
Members of the Steering Committee were as follows:

- Fia Eliasson-Creek, Director of Research and Planning, GRCC
- Eileen Ely, President, GRCC
- John Ramsey, Executive Director of Public Information, GRCC (Chair)
- George Copa, Consultant, New Designs for Learning

Project Administrator, Project Director, and Support Staff

The Project Administrator for the scanning process was John Ramsey, Executive Director of Public Information for GRCC. He was the communication link with the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee and Steering committee, Project Director, and GRCC President; coordinated project activities and administered the scanning process for the college. The environmental scanning Project Director was Dr. George Copa, Director, New Designs for Learning based in Salem, Oregon. Dr. Copa’s major responsibilities were as follows: (1) Prepare meeting agendas and supporting materials for the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee and Steering Committee meetings; (2) facilitate Environmental Scan Advisory Committee and Steering Committee meetings, (3) prepare a summary of each Environmental Scan Advisory Committee meeting; and (4) prepare the final Environmental Scan Report. John Ramsey and George Copa were provided administrative support by Tawnya McLavey, Executive Assistant to the President, GRCC. She made arrangements for all meetings, assisted in communicating agendas and supporting information to meeting participants and developed an initial summary of each meeting.

Charge

The charge to the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee by the GRCC President was as follows:

To engage in and guide an environmental scan that will inform Green River’s strategic planning and assessment for the next seven years.

Major Activities

The major activities making up the scanning process for developing the Environmental Scan were as follows:

Preparation for Scanning Process

The focus here was on development and initial review of the environmental scanning process to insure it met the purposes of GRCC (including the relation to the accreditation process) and was feasible in terms of timelines, participants, and resources, and (2) identifying those to be involved in the scanning process. This review of and preparation for the scanning was initially done by the GRCC President, GRCC Executive Director of Public Information and the Project Director. At the first meeting of
the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee, they also had opportunity to review and suggest improvements to the scanning process.

**Identifying Information**

This step involved query of information useful in past strategic planning efforts at GRCC, experiences of other colleges and review of related research, exemplary practices and higher education leadership thinking. The categories of information considered included: local, state and national demographic and economic trends; local, state and national issues, directions and mandates in higher education; results of previous GRCC strategic plan and assessments (e.g., student engagement, accreditation-related materials, effectiveness indicators); and GRCC strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, assets, challenges and aspirations (e.g., marketing assessment, community focus group results, experiences with budget retrenchment and reallocation). The Project Administrator and the Project Director took a lead role in identifying categories of potentially relevant information. The first meeting of the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee focused on identifying specific kinds of information thought to be important to support the strategic plan and assessment process. Also a section was created on the GRCC website to share project information and progress easily and quickly with the Advisory Committee during the scanning process.

**Prioritizing Information**

There were limits to the time and resources to do the environmental scan and the availability of the information indentified. Additionally, some information was assumed to be more important than others. At the second meeting of the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee, they were asked to prioritize the information identified in their first meeting in terms of relative importance using the criteria of: (1) Importance, (2) Breath of coverage, (3) Ease of gathering, (4) Consistent standards for operational definitions (e.g., student retention, program completion, student success) and (4) Implications for increasing and strengthening college partnerships.

**Collecting, Analyzing, and Summarizing Information**

The process used to collect the highest priority information for the environmental scan was a joint venture of GRCC and the Project Director. Primary data collection was done by members of the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee with the Project Administrator and Project Director serving in a consultative role. The consultative role included: (1) developing a data collection, analysis and summary plan; (2) working with the Committee members to identify staffing responsibilities; (3) developing a format and guiding directions for Environmental Scan Summaries; (4) developing a timeline for the data collection, analysis and summary process; (5) suggesting sources of information; (6) reviewing data collection questionnaires and (7) advising on the data collection procedures. The Environmental Scan Advisory Committee met to review the data collection process and suggest ways to improve the process. The Project Director spent a half-day on campus with those responsible for collecting information to provide individual consultation where needed.
**Synthesizing Information**

The synthesizing of information to constitute the final report of the environmental scan was primarily done by the Project Director. The Environmental Scan Advisory Committee held a meeting to review a draft of the Environmental Scan Report. Final review of the report was done by the Environmental Scan Steering Committee before being submitted to the GRCC President.

**Timeline**

The scanning process occurred on the following meeting schedule:

- **3/21/12** Meeting #1 – Review of scanning process and identifying potentially important information
- **4/10/12** Meeting #2 – Review progress and prioritizing information to be included
- **4/24/12** Meeting #3 – Review progress and review of data collection process
- **5/15/12** Meeting #4 – Review progress and individual advising on data collection, analysis and summary process
- **7/24/12** Meeting #5 – Review progress and review environmental scan report
- **8/15/12** Submit report of environmental scan to GRCC President

The meetings of the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee were approximately two hours in length and all occurred on the main campus of GRCC.
Environmental Scanning Results

At the initial meeting, the Environmental Scan Advisory Committee identified more than 250 information items in eight broad information categories for possible inclusion in the environmental scan for GRCC. The topics were refined into 62 potentially important information categories. The Scan Advisory Committee then prioritized these 62 information categories resulting in determining 18 information categories to be included in the scan process. The criteria for prioritizing the information categories were: (1) Importance, (2) Breath of coverage, (3) Ease of gathering, (4) Consistent standards for operational definitions (e.g., student retention, program completion, student success) and (4) Implications for increasing and strengthening college partnerships. Information categories were rated on a scale of 1-5 with 1=Essential, 2=Very Important, 3=Important, 4=Less Important, and 5=Least Important.

For data collection, analysis and summary purposes, the 18 information categories were reorganized into four data collection strategies: (1) Single source information items, (2) Multiple source information items (requiring synthesis across items), (3) Existing information items (already available at GRCC), and (4) New information (original data would need to be collected). A format for a one-page Environmental Scan Summaries was prepared to provide consistency and brevity to the summary process for each information category (or information items within categories). The format for the summaries included the headings: (1) Author and date of summary, (2) Topic, (3) Focus, (3) Implications, and (4) Source(s).

Information Categories

The information categories selected as most important to be included in the environmental scan in support of the strategic planning and assessment process for GRCC were as follows:

- Economic Development Plans – Local, Region, and State
- Employment Outlook – Local, Region, State, and Nation
- K-12 Enrollment and Graduation Forecasts (including diversity information) -- Local and Regional
- Higher Education Legislative Studies and Mandates – State and Nation
- Government Revenue Forecasts – Local, Region, and State
- Best/Exemplary Practices in Community and Technical Colleges and New Directions in Higher Education -- State and Nation
- Accreditation – Standards and Initiatives (Northwest and Nation), Exemplary Reports, and GRCC Reports and Feedback

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2 As noted in the list, six of the information categories were not available at the time this report was completed – Environmental Scan Summaries for these items are planned to be completed at a later date.
• Current and Trends in Higher Education Enrollment and Completion/Graduation Rates – State and Nation
• Strategic Plans from Comparable Colleges, Nearby Colleges, and Those with Exemplary Plans
• Existing and Developing Plans -- GRCC
• Linkage Among All Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC
• Budget Plan – GRCC
• Student Enrollment – GRCC (planned to be completed later)
• Student Completion Rates – GRCC (planned to be completed later)
• Student Post-program Success – GRCC (planned to be completed later)
• Community Perspectives on GRCC – Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges
• Student Perspectives on GRCC -- Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges (planned to be completed later)
• Staff Perspectives on GRCC -- Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges (planned to be completed later)

Implications for Strategic Planning and Assessment

The Environmental Scan Summaries for information pertaining to each of the highest priority information categories to be included in the environmental scan are presented in the Appendix to this report. The sources of information from which the summaries were drawn are available on the GRCC website in the section entitled “GRCC Environmental Scan.” Presented below are the implications (in the form of key points) for the GRCC strategic planning and assessment process drawn from the Environmental Scan Summaries for each information categories.

Economic Development Plans – Local, Region, and State

Key Points:
• Washington economic growth has given mixed signals similar to the U.S. economy.
• Employment growth in recent months has been modest, leaving the current level of employment lower than anticipated.
• Washington economy will continue to outperform the U.S. economy by a narrow margin, but downside risks continue to outweigh upside risks.
• Washington economy will require additional skills to adapt to new workplace processes and problems.
• Occupations typically needing some type of postsecondary education for entry are projected to grow the fastest during the next decade. There is unmet demand for workers at the baccalaureate-plus level in engineering, software, architecture, computer science, medical, human and protective services sectors. Programs focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) should be supported.

• Community and technical colleges should expand capacity in workforce development emphasizing underserved populations (low income adults), improving retention and transitions of students to meet economic demands and developing more mechanisms for training those already working.

• Colleges should offer multiple-entry, re-entry and exit points with educational programs including credit for prior learning.

• Integrated Basic Skills Education and Training (I-BEST), learning communities, improved placement, accelerated models and programs that facilitate students moving from professional programs to baccalaureate degrees (e.g., applied baccalaureate degrees) should be expanded.

• Student services needs to prepare to serve a larger proportion of adult students, particularly student of color, people with disabilities, youth leaving foster care, low wage workers and older working adults.

• Continue to support academic transfer and professional/technical programs.

• Ensure that transfer students are able to satisfy transfer requirements to successfully pursue baccalaureate degrees.

• Work closely with local employers to identify learning outcomes for professional/technical students to enhance their employment opportunities.

• Industries important to the Auburn and Kent areas are non-metallic mining; manufacturing; transportation, communications and utilities; wholesale trade, retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate; and services.

• Continue outreach for partnerships with area business community (e.g., advisory committees, internships).

• GRCC serves a critical continuing need for skill development and training for local industries.

• Based on a study of the local and regional economic contribution of GRCC, the College should: (1) Bolster its mission of improving the lives of people, (2) Demonstrate the economic value of international students, (3) Reinforce its goal of financial stewardship and public accountability, (4) Support its goal on access and (5) Strengthen the linkage to the communities it serves.
Employment Outlook – Local, Region, State, and Nation

Key Points:

- Nationally, total employment is predicted to increase with population growth slowing for 16-24 year olds and growing more rapidly for older groups.

- Job growth will continue to increase in the service sector relative to the goods producing sector.

- Occupations with fastest growth projected for 2010-20 that require an associate degree or higher are biomedical engineering, veterinarian technicians/technologists, physical therapist assistant, event planners, diagnostic medical sonographers and occupational therapist assistant. The list of occupations expected to experience the most growth over the next 10 years includes: registered nurses, practitioners/technical occupations, retail salespersons, home health aides, personal care aids, office clerks, food preparation, customer services, truck drivers, postsecondary teachers and construction.

- Increased job growth overall is projected for healthcare, professional, scientific, technical service, personal care/service and social service areas.

- Occupations requiring a postsecondary education will experience higher growth rates. In summary, the population is aging and jobs of the future will require more advance degrees than in the past.

- Support Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant and nursing programs. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs should be supported. Articulation agreements with Washington State University in STEM areas should be considered.

- Growth in service sector jobs will require adequate communication skills and ability to empathize with various social groups as co-workers and customers.

- With the aging population there is an increased need to continue to provide access and services to non-traditional students.

- Because more advanced degrees are projected to be required for student success, students need access to transferable coursework and encouragement and support for transferring to a 4-year college/university.

- Existing degree programs within health care, transportation and manufacturing industries should continue to be supported. Opportunities to offer new programs in these industries should be explored.

- Develop marketing strategies to inform unemployed workers of retraining and educational opportunities at GRCC.

- Recruit and retain strong advisory committee members who will guide the college programs into the future.

- Based on a study of manufacturing industry in Washington, GRCC implications for strategic planning and assessment include: (1) Mission, vision and core
themes should address workforce training; (2) Values and objectives should include keeping learning up-to-date with workplace demands; (3) Learning outcomes should address mathematics, critical thinking and work ethics; (4) Industry certifications should be included in objectives and assessment indicators; (5) Joint industry awareness efforts and retraining may be opportunities for partnership with industry that increase the impact of GRCC on workforce capability; (6) Workforce training programs should articulate with professional baccalaureate degree programs.

K-12 Enrollment and Graduation Forecasts (including diversity information) -- Local and Regional

Key Points:

- Projected enrollments for 11th and 12th grade for 2012-13 to 2017-18 are virtually flat.
- Dropout rates have decreased (from 7.7% and 10.1% amongst 11th and 12th graders respectively to 6.2% and 8.4% respectively) from 2001 to 2007. As of the 2010-11 school year, annual dropout rates appear to be the highest amongst students identifying as American Indian (10.7%), Black (6.9%) or who have limited English proficiency (6.9%).
- Demography of K-12 districts in and around GRCC service area is rapidly changing (specifically within the Kent School District service area) and will present challenges that may be barriers to student completion and transition to post-secondary education (PSE), including English language learner support, technology literacy and a grasp of PSE options. This is true now and in the foreseeable future.
- In 2009-10, 395 of the 770 (51.3%) of GRCC’s district area high school graduates enrolling in GRCC were enrolled in at least one pre-college course, a majority of which were enrolled in pre-college mathematics courses.
- Based on K-12 enrollment projections, the number of students able to participate in postsecondary education looks to remain relatively stable over the next 5-7 years.
- Alignment with K-12 college preparatory efforts, career/technical curricular tracks and English Language Learners (ELL) services should be examined as GRCC’s mission and vision align with the basic tenets of K-12 districts.
- Postsecondary education literacy for community members and responsive offering of services on the part of GRCC are and will remain essential.
- The clientele of K-12 and GRCC will overlap regardless of graduation/dropout rates and college preparation levels among students, but the services offered will need to be adjusted as rates change. Planning with regional perspective will in the long term help us better align services with needs of community members.
With a long-term, regional approach to strategic planning in mind, partnerships with area K-12 districts can help college preparation process, postsecondary education literacy, etc., which will eventually lead to more students utilizing their time at GRCC toward their identified program(s) of study (instead of having to focus on remediation as a barrier to post-secondary educational attainment).

Higher Education Legislative Studies and Mandates – State and Nation

Key Points:

- Ensure youth receive education and training to be successful in work or postsecondary education.
- Provide access to lifelong education, training and employment services to all adults including those with barriers.
- Prepare students, current workers and dislocated workers with the skills necessary to meet the needs of local industry.
- Maintain and improve performance management systems for workforce development.
- Engage business, labor and public partners in continuous improvement of Washington’s workforce development system.
- Creating pathways to high-wage, high demand jobs will likely continue to be a focus as the state moves forward with its economic recovery.
- Federal policy actions to increase the success of low income and academically underprepared students include: (1) Expand high touch advising and support services, (2) Increase student success in pre-college mathematics, (4) Redefine implementation policies of WorkFirst in Washington, and (4) Restructure state financial aid, making it more flexible to better meet the needs of low income students.
- Achieving the Dream legislation focuses on: (1) Creating a culture of evidence for decision making and student intervention strategies, (2) Increasing student success for low income and academically under-prepared students, (3) Aligning K-12 and postsecondary education to ease student transitions and (4) Increasing need based financial aid. GRCC needs to further explore ways to participate in the best practices being offered through this initiative.
- There is a growing interest in data among faculty and administrators in identifying barriers to student success, developing intervention strategies to improve success rates and then evaluating their effectiveness.
- It is important for GRCC to leverage funds from federal legislative mandates in support of its programs and services and to expand its financial resources.
- Important student achievement measures in Washington include: (1) Building towards college-level skills, (2) First year retention (earning 15 then 30 college
(level credits), (3) Completing college-level mathematics and (4) Completions (i.e., degrees, certificates, apprenticeship training).

- Increase focus on shorter term, intermediate learning outcomes that provide meaningful momentum towards degree and certificate completion for all students, no matter where they start. Colleges are encouraged to track student progress towards these achievement measures each quarter, providing immediate feedback and opportunities for intervention strategies.

- Goals of Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges relating to student achievement include: (1) Strengthen local economies by meeting demands for an educated and skilled workforce, (2) Use technology to improve student success, (3) Achieve increased educational attainment. Expansion of proven strategies will enhance efficiency so that saved resources can be invested in additional strategies.

- A key I-BEST strategy is to overlap/integrate basic skills instruction with professional/technical instruction. The added cost to enhance student success will require seeking additional financial resources for staffing, curricular development and staff training.

- As colleges gain a better understanding of where students get stuck and successfully move them through those hurdles, they will receive financial rewards. The investment of those dollars into expansion of proven strategies will yield additional rewards that can be invested in additional strategies.

- Pending Washington legislation focuses on increasing student access and success, strengthening instructional programs and developing and retaining high quality faculty through efficiencies acquired through shared services, increased program collaboration and standardized and centralized administrative functions and systems.

- Colleges will be asked to find efficiencies that both reduce costs and improve the quality of education and job preparation for students. Governance changes may be proposed to increase efficiency.

**Government Revenue Forecasts – Local, Region, and State**

**Key Points:**

- Continue effort to rely less on state support and more on other revenue streams such as entrepreneurial activities.

- The state’s modest growth over the next biennia will not be enough to bring community and technical college funding levels back to pre-recession levels.

- World events can drastically affect the state’s economy prompting another recession.

- Aerospace and software are expected to be the two employment sector bright spots through the next biennium with construction, finance and government employment continuing to drag down employment growth.
• Be creative in finding revenue that is neither tied to state spending or federal grants and contracts – public-private partnerships and usage fees are two ways GRCC can generate revenues to help offset stagnation in state spending.

Best/Exemplary Practices in Community and Technical Colleges and New Directions in Higher Education -- State and Nation

Key Points:

• Consider the implications of the recommendations of the 21st-Century Commission on the Future of the Community College (2012) which are set forth in three broad categories: (1) redesigning the students’ educational experience, (2) reinventing institutional roles and (3) resetting the system.

• Give attention to the major topics (or challenge) addressed at the first White House Summit on Community Colleges (2011) and the recommendations set forth for each topic: (1) Pathways to a Baccalaureate, (2) Community College Completion, (3) Financial Aid to Community College Students, (4) Community Colleges in the 21st Century and (5) The Importance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families.

• To enhancing college and industry partnerships, consider the following success factors: (1) Recognize a local/regional economic development challenge that calls for collaborative attention, (2) Establish a shared mission and goals, (3) Ensure that value is achieved for all partners (including students), (4) Have strong executive leadership from both the college and industry participants and (5) Develop a governance and accountability mechanism.

• Consider the framework of areas, measures and indicators for measuring student success in The Completion Arch (College Board and MPR Associates) for use in the assessment component of its strategic plan and assessment. The areas include: (1) Enrollment, (2) Developmental Education Placement, (3) Progress, (4) Transfer and Completion and (5) Workforce Preparation and Employment Outcomes.

• Similarly, take advantage of the Voluntary Framework for Accountability (American Association for Community Colleges) in developing objectives and indicators for the strategic plan and assessment. The objectives (each with sample indicators) currently being addressed include: (1) Student Progress and Outcomes (Developmental Education, Progress, and Student Outcomes), (2) Workforce, Economic, and Community Development (Career and Technical Education, Non-credit Courses, and Adult Basic Education/GED and (3) Student Learning Outcomes.

• Areas of attention in envisioning the future of student services include: (1) better define the nature of student services work, (2) developing and expanding theories and research to inform practice, (3) responding to, and increasing, the diversity of students, (4) demonstrating accountability for student learning and
success and (5) designing and ensuring professional development for effective student services practice.

- As with other areas of higher education, what is new for student services is the magnitude and seriousness of the demands to provide clear evidence of effectiveness and efficiency. Use of high-quality data to support decisions about policies, programs and practices is increasingly expected.
- GRCC must continue to evaluate student support services and ways to successfully and innovatively assist students in meeting their completion goals.
- Tracking the community demographics, high school demographics and student learning outcomes for current students are all critical best practices for student success.
- Learning communities provide the opportunity to address the research finding that students tend to persist in their studies if the learning is meaningful, deeply engaging and relevant to their lives. But, for this benefit to be fully realized, learning communities will require faculty to have the pedagogical training that makes the learning richer and deeper and more cross-disciplinary with attention to access, persistence and other student success factors; globalization; issues involving diversity; more purposeful assignments and effective learning outcomes. Learning spaces will need to be more flexible and adaptable to support these new forms of learning communities.
- I-BEST, an educational model that pairs professional/technical programs and basic skills instruction to provide structured pathways for English as Second Language (ESL) and other basis skills students to college-level, career-oriented certificate and degree programs, should be added in high demand occupational areas. These programs are more expensive and, therefore, students and programs need to be connected to funding sources.
- The "technology-enhanced classrooms" of two years ago may easily be out of date -- cloud computing, social media and social networking, mobility and information management are all evolving rapidly. The last of the digitally semiliterate students graduate and are being replaced by more savvy digital media consumers (e.g., iPads, media tablets).
- Develop and manage a flexible information network infrastructure to allow access to anything, anywhere and anytime. The college must prepare to deal with the security and bandwidth issues that varying devices bring to the enterprise.
- Develop a mobility strategy and reassess the number and placement of Wi-Fi points as more and more faculty members begin to use mobile devices and rich media in their classes.
- Encourage the use of device-neutral applications in the classroom, such as collaboration tools and common-format multimedia.
- Overall, the percentage of operating budget revenues coming from state appropriations has declined with this trend seemingly continuing. The underlying costs per student have risen due to the rising cost of technology, student...
services (particularly for underrepresented students) and reliance on financial aid.

- To address rising expenditures during lean economic times, some of the strategies to consider include: (1) Online learning employing “disruptive innovation” strategies to rethink the traditional classroom seat-time model; (2) Being wary of too much innovation which can increase costs that outweigh the benefits; (3) Revenue sources -- continue to anticipate a decline in state/local appropriations while enrollments increase; (4) Tuition -- relying on tuition dollars at an increasing rate and considering differentiated tuition rates based on program expense can have a negative effect on meeting the mission of the college and providing access for students; and (5) Mission creep -- beware of offering more expensive, upper-division coursework that can be very costly especially in technical areas.

- Washington’s CTCs are implementing a project named ctcLink that will provide the technological infrastructure so information will connect and move freely among all 34 community and technical colleges. Green River will need to actively participate in the design and implementation process of the ctcLink system project. Colleges and the SBCTC will need to commit the necessary human resources to architect, implement and test the system in a timely and efficient manner, with the understanding that it will require the dedication of many “key” staff members. GRCC will be in the first wave of deployments after pilot testing (2015).

- The ctcLink system customization at the system and campus levels must be minimized and will be considered only as mandated by statutory requirement or a business case that benefits the system as a whole. This could result in GRCC needing to modify or completely change current operational business processes.

- A ctcLink system implementation will require employees to use new software tools and acquire new business skills, making it possible for them to work at a different and possibly higher skill level.

- GRCC will need to review and change current local technical solutions on campus to meet the new ctcLink system requirements. Systems that replicate information and processes of the ctcLink should be eliminated.

**Accreditation – Standards and Initiatives (Northwest and Nation), Exemplary Reports, and GRCC Reports and Feedback**

Key Points:

- Accreditation agencies/commissions have shifted their focus to have institutions demonstrate continuous quality improvement that is rooted in strategic planning and makes effective use of evidence-based assessments.

- Adopt a culture of evidence-based assessment, planning and decision-making that is transparent across all areas of the institution. Assessment results need to be made available to internal and external stakeholders.
• Develop measures of student learning outcomes that clearly demonstrate student mastery of both discipline-specific and general education competencies and that is transparent and made available to the students and the public.

Current and Trends in Higher Education Enrollment and Completion/Graduation Rates – GRCC, State, and Nation

Key Points:
• Washington community and technical colleges are operating at full capacity, average class sizes have increased and most growth is seen in academic and pre-college programs.
• Overall enrollments are expected to level off.
• Enrollment growth in eLearning has slowed.
• Modest growth has occurred in applied baccalaureate offerings, I-BEST and Opportunity Grants.
• Students are bearing a larger proportion of college costs as tuition increases and state appropriations are reduced.
• Support is warranted for pre-college programs.
• Careful needs assessment should be done before initiating new programs, particularly for workforce related areas.

Strategic Plans from Comparable Colleges, Nearby Colleges and Those with Exemplary Plans

Key Points:
• Strategic planning and assessment need to be closely integrated to meet revised accreditation standards.
• Strategic plans and assessment will need to address mission, vision, values, core themes, objectives and indicators of assessment and these elements will need to be closely integrated.
• Mission statements vary – two examples are: (1) The mission of Big Bend Community College is to serve the educational needs of a diverse population throughout its service district. As a comprehensive two-year community college, the institution works with its partners to provide a variety of educational opportunities, including courses and training for university and college transfer, occupational and technical programs, basic skills and developmental education, community and continuing education, pre-employment and customized training for local business and industry, and support services for students to help promote student access, success and retention; and (2) South Puget Sound Community College’s mission is to support student success in postsecondary academic
transfer and workforce education that responds to the needs of the South Sound region.

- Core themes/end statements frame the major components of the college mission for accreditation purposes. Two examples include: (1) The End States of Big Ben Community College are: Mission, Access, Partnerships, Student Achievement, Climate, and Multiculturalism; and (2) The Core Themes of South Puget Sound Community College are Academic Transfer Education, Workforce Education, and Support Student Success.

**Existing and Developing Plans - GRCC**

**Key Points:**

- A fully developed Instructional Plan is important for the College and would give direction to many other planning efforts including Student Services Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Plan, Marketing Plan and other sub-unit instructional plans. A fully developed Instructional Plan is key to many important areas of the College such as enrollment, program mix (i.e. basic, academic, professional technical), the development of new programs and overall instructional direction.

- While it is important that the various GRCC plans are not written independent of each other, there is consideration that a stand-alone Student Services Plan should be developed, particularly with Instruction and Student Services reporting to two different vice presidents. The current plan needs to be updated.

- An environmental scan should be conducted annually.

- The Facilities Master Plan (FMP) is an integrated facilities planning process that takes direction from the college strategic, instructional and student service plans and is updated every two years.

- The College is moving toward the use of fewer but larger, more efficient buildings - - in addition to maintenance and operational benefits, the College will see an improvement in program delivery and flexibility.

- The College mission, vision, and core themes should provide overall direction to the FMP.

- FMP Principles and Ideals should be congruent with college Values and Objectives. In the 2010 FMP the principle and ideals include (only a partial list): (1) Reflect the college’s values through its physical environment; (2) Support the incorporation of sustainable opportunities in campus development; (3) Plan for maximum flexibility for adapting to the changing needs of education; (4) Enhance the college’s connections to and with its communities through its physical plants; and (5) Enhance fund raising and development opportunities by improving the image of the college in the community. The 2012 FMP update will reflect the 2012 strategic planning effort.
During the next two years the GRCC Foundation will focus on two core areas: (1) Removing barriers to student success at GRCC; and (2) Significantly increasing the College’s capacity to serve students.

Foundation strategies for removing barriers to student success are: (1) Increase access to an excellent college education; and (2) Retain students by providing one-time crisis funding.

Foundation strategies for increasing the College’s capacity to serve students are: (1) Provide an increased sense of community, opportunities for connection and support services for students; and (2) Increase the number, size and scope of grants awarded to GRCC.

GRCC Foundation is focused on raising resources to increase capacity to serve students, enhance physical capacity and support the college’s ability to pursue external funding through grants.

GRCC mission, vision and goals should continue to address access, retention and student success.

Continue to build a Veteran friendly culture and find ways to support our Veteran students and continue to seek community partnerships in this endeavor.

Continue to pursue external funding through grants and leverage opportunities to build a culture of grants among faculty and staff to help achieve goals

**Linkage Among All Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC**

While Green River has various planning efforts that tie to the Strategic Plan, they do not all link together. As part of the Strategic Planning process, a flowchart of operational and departmental planning will need to be developed. This will help departments better deploy resources to meet the overall needs of the College. In some cases, departments may need to go back and readjust planning models to better reflect the strategic direction of the College and linkages to other plans.

**Budget Plan – GRCC**

Key Points:

- While GRCC was able to maintain course offerings consistent with demand during the past four years of reduced state appropriations, it will be critical for the future to either enhance revenue or to reduce expenditures by refocusing course offering and service levels.

- As the economy begins to improve, there is uncertainty regarding enrollment. The current trend suggests that State, Worker Retraining and Running Start enrollment will level off or decline slightly. International Programs enrollment is projected to maintain at the current level or grow slowing over the next biennium.

- The State Board for Community Colleges Biennial Investment Recommendation calls for renewed emphasis on student success to include serving more
underserved populations, closing the skills gap, increasing funding for adult basic skills, adoption tools for e-Learning, increase Opportunity Grant funding and improving student retention and achievement. Should earmarked funding be provided to address the system’s investment plan, this funding will be significant in providing the resources needed for GRCC to achieve its student retention and achievement goals.

- The economic slump has also impacted capital project funding (e.g., construction equipment, furnishings). Finding resources to address the need for new and/or remodeled facilities will be a challenge. As the need to expand programs to provide for a skilled workforce continues, additional facilities will be required. As the new equipment begins to age, resources will be needed to replace this equipment.

**Community Perspectives on GRCC -- Strengths/Opportunities/Challenges**

**Key Points:**

- **Strong awareness and support of existing programs (e.g., career and technical preparation, academic transfer, Associate degrees) and post-secondary education in general.**
- **Community impressed by quality of instruction, faculty and staff, curriculum and accessibility of faculty and staff.**
- **Awareness of the high level of student support services and commitment to “best for students” need to continue and grow on that support.**
- **Strong awareness and support of accessibility, affordability and outreach to students who may not see GRCC as an option for them.**
- **Support of Running Start and outreach to students while still in high school to make them aware of advantages and opportunities at GRCC**
- **Dealing well with diversity and socioeconomic issues and Veteran's issues -- need to build on the successes.**
- **International programs should be maintained and grown with suggestions to look for funding partners in the countries sending students to GRCC.**
- **Some concerns expressed about the International programs and wanting the emphasis to remain on local students.**
- **Professional/technical workers will continue to be in high demand and GRCC should be partnering with business to learn what jobs they are looking to fill and match the training to the need.**
- **Need to be aware, prepare and make best use of changes in technology both in depth of courses, innovation, on-campus technology and access through online instruction/distance learning.**
- **Awareness of the quality and success of the aviation program and workforce retraining.**
• Awareness of the need to prepare and provide for the aging population and the demand that will be created in the workplace, healthcare and continuing education.

• Support for main campus and satellite campuses growth and new facilities. Concerns about whether or not there is land to accommodate growth while preserving the natural setting.

• Pride in the friendly, supportive campus environment.

• Concerns about parking, directional signage, lighting and safety on campus.

• The College has strong community support and works hard at outreach and interaction, but needs to continue to work on partnerships. Strong indication that more and better marketing is needed with focus on bringing people to campus not just for classes but for events. Focus on getting the word out about the scope of everything the college does and its benefit to the community.

• Strong concern about state funding, budget cuts, the economy, rising costs and tuition and the effect it will have on college culture and students. Demand will be higher for low-cost education.

• Overall, consistent message from participants was that GRCC has a standard of excellence and needs to continue to look for ways to expand that excellence. GRCC should be the center of excellence in the college system, and let it be known they will accept nothing less.

**Overarching Themes**

Looking across all of the information categories and key points regarding implications, the following overarching themes appear evident for consideration in the GRCC strategic planning and assessment process:

• **Financial Resources** – develop sources of financial resources in addition to state allocations and student tuition, closely monitor efficiency in use of all financial resources and address a context of uncertainty in funding.

• **Responsiveness to Workforce Needs** – enhance awareness and responsiveness to changing workforce needs in the local community, region, state and nation.

• **Student Success** – increase focus and performance of programs and services in student retention, program completion and post-program success.

• **Student Access** – improve access to students, particularly those who are underserved based on community demographics.

• **Partnerships** – add and enhance partnerships with the community and other educational institutions (e.g., business and industry, economic development entities, K-12 education, other community and technical colleges, 4-year colleges and universities)

• **Accountability** – adopt and nurture a strong culture of evidence-based, transparent, and integrated planning, decision-making and assessment.
• **Quality** – retain and further enhance meeting standards of excellence and quality while being innovative in educational programs and services.

• **Program Mix** – maintain a diverse mix of educational programs and services that characterize a comprehensive community college (e.g., developmental, workforce, transfer, international, I-BEST, STEM).

• **Flexibility** – be flexible, adaptable and anticipatory in models and strategies for delivery of educational programs and services.

• **Marketing** – be proactive and comprehensive in providing public information about educational programs, services, accomplishments and community connections and impact.

• **Infrastructure** – continue to be innovative in the design and use of information technology and the campus environment to enhance educational programs and services, college administration and community connections.

**Closing**

This report describes the environmental scanning process and results as foundation for the strategic and assessment planning process for GRCC. The scanning process involved an advisory committee with representation of GRCC administration, faculty and staff as well as the community served by the college. The results address 18 high priority information categories that were deemed high priority for the strategic planning and assessment process. The report is designed to coherently and cohesively link planning and assessment in response to new accreditation standards faced by the college and to guide its decision making as regards to resources and actions over the next seven years.
Appendix – Environmental Scan Summaries
Environmental Scan Summaries

- Economic Development Plans – Local, Region, and State
- Employment Outlook – Local, Region, State, and Nation
- K-12 Enrollment and Graduation Forecasts (including diversity information) – Local and Region
- Higher Education Legislative Studies and Mandates – State and Nation
- Government Revenue Forecasts – Local, Region, and State
- Best/Exemplary Practices in Community and Technical Colleges and New Directions in Higher Education – State and Nation
- Accreditation – Standards and Initiatives (Northwest and Nation), Exemplary Reports, GRCC Reports and Feedback
- Current and Trends in Higher Education Enrollment and Completion/Graduation Rates – State and Nation
- Strategic Plans from Comparable Colleges, Nearby Colleges and Those with Exemplary Plans
- Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC
- Linkage Among All Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC
- Budget Plan – GRCC
- Community Perspectives of GRCC – Strengths/assets/aspirations, Opportunities and market, and Weaknesses/Challenges
Economic Development Plans –
Local, Region, and State
**Topic:** Economic Development -- Washington Economy at a Glance

**Focus:** Like the U.S. economy, the economy within the state of Washington has been giving off mixed signals. Employment growth in recent months has been modest, leaving the current level of employment lower than anticipated. Housing construction was stronger than expected but prices are still weak. Aerospace employment is still expanding, but at a slower rate than 2011. The risks to a continued recovery are still high here in Washington, where we are suffering from fiscal drag from state and local government budget cuts and the unemployment rate remains at 8.3%. Like the nation, we have seen resurgence in new car and truck sales as replacement demand is increasing. State economists expect that the Washington economy will continue to outperform the U.S. economy by a narrow margin, but downside risks (mainly from outside our borders) continue to outweigh upside risks.

**Implications:** GRCC should continue to support both its transfer and professional/technical education programs. Even though the unemployment rate is expected to remain higher than historical standards during times of economic growth, the Puget Sound region is expecting to add approximately 600,000 jobs by the year 2020. Occupations that typically need some type of postsecondary education for entry are projected to grow the fastest during this decade. The health care and social assistance sector is projected to gain the most jobs, followed by professional and business services, and construction. About 25% of all new jobs are expected in the retail trade, health care and construction industries. Here at GRCC, we need to continue to ensure that our transfer students are able to satisfy transfer requirements which will allow them to successfully pursue their baccalaureate degrees. And we need to work closely with local employers to identify the skills and types of education that they are seeking in our professional/technical programs which will most greatly enhance the employment opportunities of our students.

**Sources:**


**Topic:** Economic Development -- South King County, WA  

**Focus:** Survey of South King County cities and their economic engine potential/analysis. Of particular interest is the economic specialization analysis. Economic specialization by industry sector for Auburn & Kent are:

- Mining nonmetallic
- Manufacturing
  - Furniture and fixtures
  - Fabricated metal products
  - Industry and commercial machinery and computers
  - Transportation equipment
  - Food and kindred products
  - Paper and allied products
  - Printing, publishing and allied industries
  - Rubber and miscellaneous plastics products
  - Electrical and electronic equipment (excluding computers)
- Transportation, communication & utilities
  - Motor freight transportation and warehouse
  - Transportation services
- Wholesale trade
  - Wholesale trade-durable goods
  - Wholesale trade-nondurable goods
- Retail trade
  - Building materials, garden supply and mobile homes
  - Apparel and accessory stores
- Finance, insurance & real estate
  - Non-depository credit institutions
- Services
  - Automobile repair, services and parking

**Implications:** GRCC should continue their outreach for partnerships with our area business community, whether through the advisory committees, internships or other methods of business partnering opportunities. Though this is “old” data collected before the economic downturn, many of these industries are still highly represented throughout the Auburn/Kent valley. GRCC serves a critical need of skill development/training for many of these industries, and will be required to continue providing these vital skills for our area businesses.

**Source:** 2006 South King County Economic Engine Study (provided as a PDF)
**Topic:** Economic Development -- Role of Community and Technical Colleges in Economic Development

**Focus:** Workers for the State’s economy of the future will require additional skills and ability to adapt to new processes and solve problems. Almost 50% of the new jobs are estimated to require at least some college. Training will be needed for construction, services, finance, insurance, real estate, transportation, warehousing, and utilities. There is an unmet demand for workers at the baccalaureate-plus level in engineering, software, architecture, and computer science, medical, and human and protective services. Overall, there is a shortage of knowledgeable and skilled workers. Recommendations include expanding capacity in workforce development among the CTC’s, emphasizing underserved populations (low-income adults/working adults), improving retention and transition of students to meet economic demands, and developing more mechanisms for training particularly for those already working. Good quote: “We need to raise knowledge and skill levels more quickly with fewer leaks in the pipeline.”

**Implications:** Colleges are encouraged to offer multiple entry, re-entry and exit points with educational programs. I-BEST, learning communities, improved placement, accelerated models, and programs that allow students to move from a prof-tech program to a bachelor’s degree need to be supported. Applied bachelor’s degrees are also an effective way for students to be given the best opportunity for future employment. The article also recommends credit be awarded for prior learning. Student services also needs to be prepared to serve more adults, particularly students of color, people with disabilities, youth leaving foster care, low wage workers, and other working adults. Courses for STEM programs need to be supported.

**Source:**

http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/_ehwkforceeconomicdev.aspx


http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/_ehwkforceeconomicdev.aspx
**Topic:** Economic Development -- Contributions of Green River Community College

**Focus:** Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) was commissioned by the College to provide a report on the economic contributions of GRCC in the local communities. This report: (1) details the economic impact of the College by providing an overview of GRCC and the regional economy; (2) presenting an investment analysis from the students’ and taxpayers’ perspectives; (3) determines the impact of the College on the economic growth of King County; and (4) provides analysis of the social benefits GRCC provides the community. Data collection took place in 2009-10.

**Implications:** The key implications for the College’s strategic plan include the investment analysis and the economic growth analysis the study provides and the benefits received by students, the local communities, King County, and state of Washington. Study results pertain to GRCC’s mission, vision, values, and objectives; the results suggest that GRCC should:

- Bolster its mission of improving the lives of people
- Demonstrate the economic value of international students
- Reinforce its goal of financial stewardship and public accountability
- Support its goal on access
- Strengthen the linkage to the communities it serves.

While the study does not project future benefits provided by the College, it has significant value in supporting and validating the aforementioned mission and goals.

**Source:** Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. “The Economic Contribution of Green River Community College” February 2011 EMSI
Employment Outlook –
Local, Regional, State, and National

**Focus:** The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics provides projections in population, labor force, employment, total job openings, and education/training classification systems. Total employment is predicted to increase thought the population growth is slowing particularly in the 16-24 year old range; whereas the population of older groups of Americans will grow at a more rapid rate. Jobs continue to be increase in areas with a service-providing focus compared to a goods-producing industry. Occupations with the *fastest* growth, projected for 2010-20, that require an associate’s degree or higher are: biomedical engineering, veterinarian technicians/technologists, physical therapist assistants, event planners, diagnostic medical sonographers, and occupational therapy assistants. Some of the occupations with the *largest* numeric growth, projected for 2010-20, that require an associate’s degree or higher include registered nurses, postsecondary teachers, and nursing aides. Increases overall all are found in healthcare, professional, scientific, technical service, personal care/service, and social service areas. Occupations requiring postsecondary education will experience higher growth rates with jobs requiring a master’s degree projected to grow the fastest. Bottom line: population is aging and jobs of the future will require more advanced degrees than in the past. Jobs only requiring a high school diploma will experience the least amount of growth.

**Implications:** GRCC should continue to support its OTA, PTA, and nursing programs. STEM fields/degrees need to be supported. Maybe a transfer program with WSU in veterinarian medicine or veterinarian technology could be considered? Since the shift to service-providing fields is occurring, students need adequate communication skills (written/oral) as well as an ability to empathize with various social groups as they will likely be in jobs that serve customers. With an aging population, GRCC needs to continue to provide access to and services for non-traditional students. Because more advanced degrees may be required for future success, students need transferable coursework, encouragement and support for transferring to a 4-year college/university.

**Source:** [http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/print/projections-overview.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/print/projections-overview.htm)

Topic: Employment Outlook – BLS Employment Changes, National

Focus: The Employment Situation report, released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in May, 2012, provides a summary of the employment changes across the nation and denotes specific industries which are growing. The report provides evidence employment continues to rise in the health care, transportation, and manufacturing industries and is declining in the construction industry. Employment in professional and business services, information, financial, hospitality, and government remains unchanged.

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics Map/Data, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides a 12 month comparison of unemployment rates for April, 2011-April, 2012 by county in Washington State. The average net change is less than 2.0%.

Implications: The key implications for GRCC strategic planning include:

- Existing degree programs within health care, transportation, and manufacturing industries should continue to be supported.
- GRCC should identify opportunities to offer new programs in the health care, transportation, and manufacturing industries.
- GRCC should develop marketing strategies to inform unemployed workers of retraining and educational opportunities at GRCC so as to capitalize on the continued unemployment status.
- GRCC should recruit and retain strong advisory committee members who will guide the college programs into the future.

Source(s):

**Topic:** Employment Outlook -- 30 Occupations with the Largest Projected Employment Growth, 2010-20.

**Focus:** This news release states the 30 occupations expected to experience the most growth over the next decade. The list includes: registered nurses, practitioners/technical occupations, retail salespersons, home health aides, personal care aids, office clerks, food preparation, customer services, truck drivers, postsecondary teachers, and construction.

**Implications:** This article is a support for the need for nurses and jobs in technical fields. The construction reference shows that construction jobs are recovering but not necessarily to the pre-recession level. Students need strong communication skills for future employment.

**Source:** [http://bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t06.htm](http://bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t06.htm)

**Topic** – Employment Outlook -- Workforce Training Needs for Manufacturing Industry in Washington

**Focus** – This report summarizes a series of six focus interviews conducted by the Association of Washington Business with manufacturers during the Fall/2011 in Moses Lake, Spokane, the Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Everett, and Mount Vernon. Manufacturing accounts for 9.3% of the state’s employment (290,000 workers) and annual economic impact of $132.2 billion in 2009. Issues addressed were: (1) Business Competitiveness, (2) Business Expansion, and (3) Workforce Training Needs. The major workforce training concerns identified were: (1) Not difficult to find entry level workers to train, but is difficult for small- and medium-sized businesses to keep them; (2) higher-level workers, including management-level employees and engineers, are difficult to recruit (shortfalls in math and critical thinking continue to be a challenge); (3) certifications are a positive aspect in the hiring process if they meet businesses workforce needs; (4) work ethic is seriously lacking in the available pool of workers; (5) an industry awareness and/or image campaign would be beneficial in recruiting the next generation of workers; (6) the training system has not kept up with the increasingly high tech and automated manufacturing industry; and (7) most retraining is done internally.

**Implications** – The key implications for GRCC strategic planning and assessment include:

- Mission, vision, and core themes should address workforce training
- Values and objectives should include keeping learning up-to-date with workplace demands
- Learning outcomes should address mathematics, critical thinking, and work ethics
- Industry certifications should be included in objectives and assessment indicators
- Joint industry awareness efforts and retraining may be opportunities for partnership with industry that increase the impact of GRCC on workforce capability.
- Workforce training programs should articulate with professional baccalaureate degree programs

**Source** – Association of Washington Business Institute, 2012 Challenges & Opportunities for Manufacturing in Washington State.

The Association’s website is [www.awbinstitute.org](http://www.awbinstitute.org).
K-12 Enrollment and Graduation Forecasts
(including diversity information) –
Local and Region
**Topic:** K-12 Enrollment and Graduation Forecast

**Focus:**
The enrollment and graduation forecast of the K-12 districts in and around the GRCC service area

- **Enrollments:** According to OSPI, projected enrollments for 11th and 12th grade for 2012-13 to 2017-18 are virtually flat. The range of fluctuations in projected enrollments for 11th and 12th graders is 3.3% (-1.45% to +1.87%). Dr. Vargas, Superintendent of the Kent School District (KSD), noted that the overall population served by KSD is very stable, though a population bulge is being observed in pre-K levels. Since 1990, secondary educational attainment in Washington State has increased steadily (from 83.8% in 1990 to 89.3% in 2006-08).

- **Dropouts:** Dropout rates have decreased (from 7.7% and 10.1% amongst 11th and 12th graders respectively to 6.2% and 8.4% respectively) from 2001 to 2007. As of the 2010-11 school year, annual dropout rates appear to be the highest amongst students identifying as American Indian (10.7%), Black (6.9%) or who have limited English proficiency (6.9%).

The factors potentially influencing enrollment and graduation forecasts of the K-12 districts in and around the GRCC service area

- **Demography of K-12 districts in and around GRCC service area** - Rapidly changing demographics (specifically within the KSD service area) will present challenges that may be barriers to student completion and transition to post-secondary education (PSE), including English language learner support, technology literacy, and a grasp of PSE options. This is true now and in the foreseeable future. Some districts, like Kent, are very focused on technology literacy and are diligently maintaining or increasing technology literacy amongst their students.

Pre-/college enrollments from GRCC’s district high schools

- In 2009-10, 395 of the 770 (51.3%) of GRCC’s district area high school graduates enrolling enrolled in at least one pre-college course, a majority of which were enrolled in pre-college math courses.

**Implications:** Based on K-12 enrollment projections, the number of students able to participate in PSE looks to remain relatively stable over the next 5-7 years. Alignment with K-12 college prep efforts, Career/Technical curricular tracks, and ELL services should be examined as GRCC’s mission and vision align with the basic tenets of K-12 districts’. PSE literacy for community members and responsive offering of services on the part of GRCC are and will remain essential. The clientele of K-12 and GRCC will overlap regardless of graduation/dropout rates and college preparation levels among students, but the services offered will need to be adjusted as rates change. Planning
with regional perspective will, in the long term, help us better align services with needs of community members. With a long-term, regional approach to strategic planning in mind, partnerships with area K-12 districts can help college preparation process, PSE literacy, etc., which will eventually lead to more students utilizing their time at GRCC toward their identified program(s) of study (instead of having to focus on remediation as a barrier to post-secondary educational attainment).

Source(s):

Enrollment and graduation forecasts:

- OSPI: Determination of Project Enrollments by Cohort Survival (Report 1049), King and Pierce Counties, Retrieved 6/12/12 from: [http://www.k12.wa.us/SchFacilities/Programs/EnrollmentProjections.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/SchFacilities/Programs/EnrollmentProjections.aspx)

The factors potentially influencing enrollment and graduation forecasts

- Meeting with Dr. Lee Vargas and his administrative staff on 6/14/12

Pre-/college enrollments from GRCC’s district high schools

Higher Education Legislative Studies and Mandates –
State and Nation
**Topic:** Higher Education Legislative Studies & Mandates -- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

**Focus:** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) of 2009 has three elements:

- Tax Benefits ($297.9 billion)
- Contracts, Grants, and Loans ($235 billion)
- Entitlements ($226.8 billion)

More than $8 billion has gone to Washington State.

Nationally, more than $90 billion has gone to support education (i.e. Student Aid, Training and Employment) and additional funds have been awarded for job training. Washington State community colleges, including Green River Community College, receive grant money from the Recovery Act to support Work Study and general educational support.

**Implications:** The State of Washington continues to leverage funds from the Recovery Act to support education. Green River should continue to participate through the Foundation to receive these funds.


Focus: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 replaced Job Training and Partnership Act and the Adult Education Act. It had a sunset date of 2003 and has been reauthorized annually since. Currently Congress is working on HR 4227 and 4297 to reform and reauthorize WIA. The Senate worked on discussion drafts of each Title of WIA about a year ago, but as the Senate could not agree on how to proceed, and it has not been worked on since. Title I of WIA authorizes state workforce boards. For 2011-12, the Washington State Workforce Board identified five goals for creating and sustaining a high-skill, high wage economy:

1. Ensure youth receive education and training to be successful in work or postsecondary education
2. Provide access to lifelong education, training, and employment services to all adults including those with barriers
3. Prepare students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skills necessary to meet the needs of local industry
4. Maintain and improve performance management systems for workforce development
5. Engage business, labor, and public partners in continuous improvement of Washington's workforce development system.

This summer, the Workforce Board will release a draft of the proposed state plan to cover the years 2012 to 2017.

Implications: Creating pathways to high-wage, high demand jobs will likely continue to focus as the state moves forward with its economic recovery. If adopted, the proposed five-year state plan will play an important role as the state moves forward with its economic recovery. As GRCC will continue to serve adults developing skills for the workplace, this plan will impact our own strategic planning.

Sources:


**Topic:** Higher Education Legislative Studies & Mandates -- Achieve the Dream

**Focus:** Four major policy actions to increase the success of low income and academically underprepared students:

- Expand high touch advising and support services.
- Increase student success in pre-college math.
- Redefine implementation policies of WorkFirst in the state.
- Restructure state financial aid, making it more flexible to better meet the needs of low income students.

AtD (Achieving the Dream) focuses on:

- Creating a culture of evidence for decision making and student intervention strategies.
- Increasing student success for low income and academically under-prepared students.
- Aligning K-12 and postsecondary education to ease student transitions.
- Increasing need-based financial aid.

**Implications:** AtD has generated growing demand for an interest in data among faculty and administrators in identifying barriers to student success, developing intervention strategies to improve success rates, and then evaluating their effectiveness. GRCC needs to evaluate ways to participate in the best practices being offered through this initiative in order to use the data findings to guide broader strategic thinking and decision making.

**Source(s):**

[http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_achievingthedream.aspx](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_achievingthedream.aspx)

*Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count* is a **national initiative** to help more community college students — particularly low-income students and students of color — succeed. Strategies identified to help more students continue their studies and earn certificates and degrees include:

- Helping students better prepare for college-level work by focusing on developmental education.
- Engaging students in the classroom through new instructional techniques that include team learning and the combining of subjects to make learning more relevant to students’ lives.
- Using student success courses to teach skills such as time management and effective study skills.

[http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/achieving_the_dream_state_policy_report_final_feb_2010.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/achieving_the_dream_state_policy_report_final_feb_2010.pdf)
Topic: Higher Education Legislative Studies & Mandates -- Student Achievement

Focus:
Achievement measures -- four categories of achievement measures:

- Building towards college-level skills
- First year retention (earning 15 then 30 college level credits)
- Completing college-level math
- Completions (degrees, certificates, apprenticeship training)

These measures focus students and institutions on shorter term, intermediate outcomes that provide meaningful momentum towards degree and certificate completion for all students no matter where they start. Colleges can track student progress towards these achievement points each quarter, providing immediate feedback and opportunities for intervention strategies.

Goals

- Strengthen local economies by meeting demands for an educated and skilled workforce.
- Use technology to improve student success
- Achieve increased educational attainment

Implications:

Funding -- Colleges compete with themselves rather than each other. Colleges will earn a set increment of reward for each Achievement point achieved above their 2010-11 point gain in any of the four categories described above. Once earned, the reward will be added to the college’s base budget.

As colleges gain a better understanding of where students get stuck and successfully move them through those hurdles, they will receive financial rewards. The investment of those dollars into expansion of proven strategies will yield additional rewards that can be invested in additional strategies.

Performance Results -- In 2009-10, points again increased in all categories. Total achievement increased by 12 percent or 40,716 total points compared to student population growth of 1 percent.

Prior to 2011, basic skills were the single largest area for point gain. Completions increased by 17 percent over one year prior. College math points were the second highest increase (5 percent).

Source(s):
http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/sbctc_system_direction_final.pdf
http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_studentachievement.aspx
**Topic:** Higher Education Legislative Studies & Mandates -- I-BEST

**Focus:** The Integrated Basic Skills Education and Training (I-BEST) educational model has had excellent success in helping basic skills (ESL and ABE) students to transition to college-level programs. The study found the I-BEST program to have “superior” success for basic skills students (page 6). The Washington legislature supports I-BEST by providing funds for the state to reimburse I-BEST FTEs at 1.75% of a normal FTE. The state doesn’t require that the extra reimbursement go to the I-BEST program; however, because I-BEST requires a 50% overlap of basic skills instruction with the professional/technical course instruction, running these classes is inherently expensive. Additionally, cost can be a barrier for students. Unlike ABE and ESL classes, which cost only $25 a quarter in tuition, I-BEST students must pay full tuition. Therefore, the vast majority of students need some kind of financial aid to participate. Many I-BEST students are working towards a high school exiting credential a part of their I-BEST program, and, therefore, they do not qualify for federal financial aid. For about 30% of I-BEST students, the Opportunity Grant is the answer. In 2007, the Washington State Legislature appropriated more than $11 million for Opportunity Grant for training for low-income students on career pathways thus providing a perfect partnership between I-BEST and Opportunity Grants. Work Source supports other students. Still, many students don’t qualify for any of the major financial aid sources. Therefore, there are often are many students who want to participate in I-BEST but cannot afford it.

**Implications:** As GRCC continues to build its I-BEST offerings, students will need support in seeking out grants and scholarship opportunities. The advisors at the Master Achievement Center (MAC) are ideally set up to work with students to find financial resources such as Opportunity Grants, Work Source funding, Federal Financial Aid, GRCC Foundation Scholarships, and other financial resources and get funding in place before starting I-BEST classes. Additionally, the college should seek out and commit financial resources to support instructor training and curriculum development for I-BEST program.

**Topic:** Higher Education Legislative Studies and Mandates -- Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6359, Improving Efficiency and Student Achievement

**Focus:** ESSB 6359 established a timeline for “work beginning in 2010 and concluding December 1, 2012.” The purpose of the work is “to increase student access and success, strengthen instructional programs, and develop and retain high quality faculty through efficiencies acquired through shared services, increased program collaboration, and standardized and centralized administrative functions and systems.” Three reports due to the Legislature: 12/01/10, 12/01/11 and 12/1/12.

The first report focused “on the process and timeline to identify new regional and state efficiencies and an analysis of current efficiencies with the community and technical college system—efficiencies in place at the time of this writing.” “This report describes efficiencies that exist only within the community and technical college system.”

Link to Executive Summary:
[www.sbctc.edu/college/education/efficiency_study_december2010_report.pdf](http://www.sbctc.edu/college/education/efficiency_study_december2010_report.pdf)

**Efficiencies in Community and Technical Colleges: Preliminary Report to the Legislature, ESSB 6359, December 2010**

The second report stated that ESSB 6359 “called on the community and technical college (CTC) system to find efficiencies that both reduce costs and improve the quality of education and job preparation for students.” The second report “addresses new and expanded efficiency efforts;...”

Link to Executive Summary:

The final report, due December 1, 2012, will address possible governance changes that may increase efficiency. The SBCTC held a Special Meeting on June 8, 2012 to discuss the final phase of the Efficiency Study with the assistance of outside consultants. The Hill Group will assist with an analysis of college expenditures, potential governance changes and recommendations.

**Implications:** The implications for GRCC are driven by the efficiencies in implementation stage (having completion dates beyond today’s summary) and the efficiencies in analysis and planning stages through 2017.

Link to completion dates:
Government Revenue Forecasts –
Local, Region, State
**Topic:** Government Revenue Forecasts -- Washington Economic Forecast

**Focus:** The state’s economic forecast has changed little since November. Revenue collections from November 2011 to February 2012 have come in just slightly above the forecasted values. While the outlook is positive for continued growth through 2015, there remains considerable downside risk to the forecast. Those risks include the European debt crisis and continued turmoil in the Middle East, which could impact oil production and delivery. That said, consumer spending has shown some signs of life, with fourth quarter 2011 consumption more than 4 percent above the same period in 2010. General Fund revenue for the state (GF-S) is forecasted to be $96 million more than expected back in November. The initial GF-S revenue forecast for the 2013-15 biennium is 7.1 percent higher than the current forecast for the 2011-13 biennium. The report states that the downside risks to the outlook remain high and exceed the upside risks by a wide margin.

**Implications:** The College will need to continue its effort to rely less on state support and more on other revenue streams such as entrepreneurial activities. The state’s modest growth over the next biennia will not be enough to bring community and technical college funding levels back to pre-recession levels. It is also important to note that world events can drastically effect our state’s economy prompting another recession. Aerospace and software are expected to be the two employment sector bright spots through the next biennium with construction, finance and government employment continuing to drag down employment growth. The College will need to be creative in finding revenue that is neither tied to state spending or federal grants and contracts. Public – private partnerships and usage fees are two ways GRCC can generate revenues to help offset stagnation in state spending.

**Sources:**
Washington State Economic Revenue Forecast, February 2012, Volume XXXV, No. 1

Best/Exemplary Practices in Community and Technical Colleges and New Directions in Higher Education -- State and Nation
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions: Reclaiming the American Dream – Community Colleges and the Nation’s Future

**Focus:** This is a report of the 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges published by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in 2012. In the summer of 2011 the AACC began a new venture entitled the 21st Century Initiative with the goal being to “educate an additional 5 million students with degrees, certificates, or credentials by 2020.” Phase 1 of the initiative was a listening tour with some 1,300 stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff, and community, conducted across the country. Phase 2 was the formation and meeting of the 21st Century Commission culminating in the Reclaiming the American Dream Report. The Dream in focus, while not specifically identified, entails upward mobility, educated populace, economic growth, and vibrant democracy. The Commission was made up of 38 members representing leadership in community colleges and its collaborators who met for two meeting, both two days in length. The assumption made is that the “connection between education and American prosperity is direct and powerful.” They concluded that “community colleges need to be redesigned for new times” based on finding “student success rates that are unacceptably low, employment preparation that is inadequately connected to job market needs, and disconnects in transitions between high schools, community colleges, and baccalaureate institutions.” Further they concluded that campus leaders understand that “…far too many students are arriving at college unprepared for college-level work, that developmental education as traditionally practiced is dysfunctional, that barriers to transfer inhibit student progress, that degree and certificate completion rates are too low, …that attainment gaps across groups of students are unacceptably wide, …that student and academic support services often are inadequate, …that student career planning is too often uninforming, and that the skills needed locally and the training offered on campus is often uncomfortably large.” They also note that college leaders “live with daunting financial challenges.” With these challenges, they claimed that “hard choices will be inevitable.” The framework for change set forth by the Commission focuses on the need for the following institutional changes (quoted from the report): (1) From a focus on student access to a focus on access and student success, (2) from fragmented course-taking to clear, coherent educational pathways, (3) from low rates of student success to high rates of student success, (4) from tolerance of achievement gaps to commitment to eradicating achievement gaps, (5) from a culture of anecdote to a culture of evidence, (6) from individual faculty prerogative to collective responsibility for student success, (7) from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration, (8) from emphasis on boutique programs to effective education at scale, (9) from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, (10) from information infrastructure as management support to information infrastructure as learning analytics, and (11) from funding tied to enrollment to funding tied to enrollment, institutional performance, and student success.
**Implications**: The implications for GRCC strategic planning and assessment related to the findings of the Commission must be inferred from their recommendations which are grouped in three categories: (1) redesigning the students’ educational experience, (2) reinventing institutional roles, and (3) resetting the system. Redesign the students’ experience includes: (1) increase completion rates of students earning community college credentials while preserving access, enhancing quality, and eradicating attainment gaps associated with income, race, ethnicity, and gender; (2) dramatically improve college readiness; and (3) Close the American skill gaps by sharply focusing career and technical education on preparing students with the knowledge and skills required for existing and future jobs in regional and global economies. Reinvent institutional roles includes: (1) refocusing the community college mission and redefine institutional roles to meet 21st century education and employment needs; and (2) invest in support structures to serve multiple community colleges through collaboration among institutions and with partners in philanthropic, government, and the private sector. Reset the system recommendations focus on: (1) target public and private investments strategically to create new incentives for institutions of education and their students and to support community college efforts to reclaim the American Dream; and (2) implement policies and practices that promote rigor, transparency, and accountability for results in community colleges. The report goes on to describe implementation strategies for each of these recommendations.

**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- White House Summit on Community Colleges

**Focus:** President Barrack Obama and Jill Biden (Professor at community college and wife of Vice President Joe Biden) convened the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges on October 5, 2010. The summit process also included four regional summits and a virtual symposium. Those attending included community college presidents, students, full and part-time faculty, business leaders, educational policy experts, state and federal lawmakers, the philanthropic community, and others. The summit had three purposes: (1) To emphasize the role of community colleges in achieving the President’s goal of making America the most educated country in the world by 2020, (2) To demonstrate that community colleges are critical partners in our efforts to prepare our graduates to lead the 21st century workforce, and (3) To highlight the Skills for America’s Future initiative, a new Gates Foundation program called Completion by Design, and the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

**Implications:** In its strategic planning and assessment process, GRCC should consider the relevance of the major topics (or challenge) addressed at the Summit and the recommendations set forth for each topic. The major topics (and a few selected recommendations for each) are as follows: (1) Pathways to a Baccalaureate (e.g., Ensure dual enrollment course transfer, jointly admit students to a community college and a university), (2) Community College Completion (e.g., Create high school dual-credit opportunities, Award credit for prior learning experiences), (3) Financial Aid to Community College Students (e.g., Further simplify the financial aid process and forms, build public-private partnerships in areas of outreach and financial literacy), (4) Community Colleges in the 21st Century (e.g., Foster and institution-level culture of evidence-based decision making, create stronger partnerships with industry to ensure work opportunities and job placement; increase teaching opportunities for business representatives), (5) The Importance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families (e.g., Offer more specialized training for veterans with PTSD, Examine the effective use of GI Bill benefits).

**Source(s):** The White House Summit on Community Colleges, Summit Report, June, 2011
Available at website: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/CommunityCollege](http://www.whitehouse.gov/CommunityCollege)
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions: Community College and Industry Partnerships

**Focus:** This paper was prepared for the 21st-Century Commission as a review of new directions and best practices in successful partnerships between community colleges and business and industry. The author concludes that “the scale and adaptability of community colleges make them a strong choice as driver” preparing high skilled workers “…necessary to preserve the nation’s competitiveness and economic opportunity.” Further the author states that “Among higher education institutions, community colleges stand closest to the crossroads of higher education and the real world.” The only way to get a close alignment among educational programs and industry workforce needs is “…for business and education leaders to build collaborations that leverage their combined knowledge of labor markets, skills, pedagogy, and students.”

**Implications:** The success factors for community college partnerships that merit consideration by GRCC include (quoted from report): (1) Recognize a local/regional economic development challenge that calls for collaborative attention, (2) Establish a shared mission and goals, (3) Ensure that value is achieved for all partners (including students), (4) Have strong executive leadership from both the college and industry participants, and (5) Develop a governance and accountability mechanism.” An intermediary can provide a platform for these partnerships; intermediaries can include “community-based organizations, labor unions and apprenticeship committees, other colleges, workforce development agencies, human service agencies, and economic development agencies.” Good practices in developing and maintaining partnerships, particularly in serving non-traditional students, include: (1) Curricular and instructional transformation (e.g., contextualization, modularized and competency-based curriculum and accelerated degree completion, workplace-based learning, and learn and earn models); (2) Academic and Social Support (e.g., forming small learning communities, funding a career center that provides financial support, academic, and career advising); (3) Professional development (e.g., develop skills needed to design new curricula, teach integrated developmental, occupational, and academic coursework, and better track student progress and employer needs), (4) Shared resource sustainability (e.g., cultivate board level leadership for partnerships, co-invest in facilities and equipment); and (5) Systemic institutional alignment/improvement (e.g., simplify enrollment for non-traditional students, integrate funding across missions, use data-driven program accountability, articulation of credit for learning). Case studies of these practices are provided.

**Source(s):** Soares, Louis. Community College and Industry Partnerships. This paper was prepared for the White House Summit on Community Colleges held October 5, 2011. The papers are all available at the website: [http://www.ed.gov/college-completion/community-college-summit](http://www.ed.gov/college-completion/community-college-summit)
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Measuring Community College Student Success

**Focus:** This summary focuses on a web-based strategy or tool to use accessible data to describe community college student progress and success. The strategy, called “The Completion Arch: Measuring Community College Student Success,” is said to be based on “…data results of national initiatives and published research” and was conceived by the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center and MPR Associates (a non-profit firm). The Completion Arch focuses on five topical areas that address the progress of students through community colleges and into the workforce: (1) Enrollment, (2) developmental education placement, (3) progress, (4) transfer and completion, and (5) workforce preparation and employment outcomes. For each of these areas, the strategy includes multiple measures (i.e., a conceptual definition of student progress within the general topical area) and indicators (i.e., a specific operational definition of a measure and its results) as well as sources of needed data that are national, state, or institution driven.

**Implications:** GRCC should consider the framework of areas, measures, and indicators for use in the assessment component of its strategic plan and assessment. The areas and measures, and number of indicators are as follows: (1) Enrollment: Fall enrollment (1 indicator), Unduplicated annual enrollment (1 indicator), (2) Developmental Education Placement: Placement in developmental courses (6 indicators), Participation in developmental courses (10 indicators), (3) Progress: Precollege milestones [Completion of the first developmental course (3 indicators), Completion of developmental sequence (6 indicators)], College milestones [Enrollment in gatekeeper courses (6 indicators), Completion of gatekeeper courses (6 indicators), Threshold number of credits in specified time (6 indicators), Persistence over terms and years (2 indicators), Completion of transfer curriculum (1 indicator)], (3) Momentum [Full-time attendance in first term (2 indicators), Completion of courses attempted (2 indicators), Specified credits earned within one year (1 indicator), Continuous enrollment (2 indicators), Summer credits earned (1 indicator)], (4) Transfer and Completion: Number of degrees and certificates awarded (1 indicator), Completion rates within six years (1 indicator), Persistence without a degree after six years (1 indicator), Time to degree (3 indicators), Credits to degree (2 indicators), Near program completion after six years (1 indicator), Graduation rates (1 indicator), and (5) Workforce Preparation and Employment Outcomes: Licensure exam pass rates (4 indicators), Job placement rates (1 indicator), Graduates' wages and wage growth (7 indicators). Colleges are encouraged to customize the areas, measures, and indicators selected to meet their needs and information availability.

**Source(s):** College Board Policy & Advocacy Center. The Completion Arch: Measuring Community College Student Success.

**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Voluntary Accountability Framework for Community Colleges

**Focus:** The focus of this summary is on the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) which is described as “the first comprehensive national accountability system created by community colleges, for community colleges.” Further, the presentation states that, “Community college leaders – facilitated by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) – conceived, developed and pilot-tested the first set of VFA metrics, which gauge how well our institutions perform in serving a variety of students and purposes.” The VFA has three parts: (1) Measures of student progress and outcomes; (2) Measures of workforce, economic, and community development; and (3) An approach for assessing student learning outcomes.

Using wording directly from the VFA website, AACC, Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and College Board, with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education, reviewed research to identify the need for a common accountability framework among community colleges and determine potential next steps. Based upon the discovery and planning period, AACC and its partners managed the development of metrics for the VFA - to help community colleges gather and use data to improve their effectiveness. Development of the metrics included: (1) Analysis of current college and state data collection efforts, (2) Development of a common set of measures detailed in a technical manual to instruct in calculation of the metrics, (3) Pilot testing of the common measures, (4) A framework for guiding colleges in the assessment of student learning outcomes, (5) A blueprint and mock-up of a data collection and display tool, (6) Market research which resulted in a strategic plan for community colleges and state systems to participate in VFA.

The VFA is the process of developing measures and indicators for the framework; these are planned to be shared with colleges during 2012-13. The framework is expected to be available for widespread college use with support services during 2013-14 and beyond.

**Implications:** GRCC should consider the VFA as a source of information in developing its objectives and indicators for the strategic plan and assessment. The objectives (each with sample indicators) currently being addressed include: (1) Student Progress and Outcomes (Developmental Education, Progress, and Student Outcomes), (2) Workforce, Economic, and Community Development (Career and Technical Education, Non-credit Courses, and Adult Basic Education/GED, and (3) Student Learning Outcomes.
Source(s): A detailed description of the VFA is available at the website:
http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/VFAWeb/Pages/WhatisVFA.aspx

There are several publications describing the development and current operation of the VFA, a few of which are as follows:

- Performance Accountability Systems for Community Colleges: Lessons from Ten States [Community College Research Center]
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions – Learning Communities

**Focus:** This article confirms what research has revealed: “Students persist in their studies if the learning they experience is meaningful, deeply engaging, and relevant to their lives” (p. 32). Learning communities (LC) address this persistence focus but today’s campuses need to do more than just designing LC models and structures. More needs to be focused on the teaching and learning of LC’s. The new era of learning communities will require faculty to not only collaborate but to have the pedagogical training that makes the learning richer and deeper and more cross-disciplinary. Before creating LC’s, faculty will also need training in access, persistence, and other student success factors before collaboration can begin. Globalization will also impact the LC’s of the future; issues involving diversity will need to be incorporated so that multiple perspectives among student scan be heard. Designing purposeful assignments and addressing effective learning outcomes will require more pedagogical training, time, and energy.

**Implications:** Green River will need to provide up-to-date research and current training to faculty interested in LC’s. Faculty development will actually need to be a learning community in itself and more intensive as LC’s no longer can be just putting two or three faculty in a room to come up with coordinated curriculum projects. Intentional integration will require more planning and purposeful design. The Teaching and Learning Center on campus can play a key role in supporting the necessary professional development. Campus classroom space will need to be more freely designated to LC’s, as currently the lack of classroom space can inhibit the development of new LC’s. It would also be beneficial if faculty could be provided with release time/stipends for the development of LC’s as more is involved than just traditional course preparation. The institutional research office will play a significant role in providing current data to faculty regarding student’s persistence, retention, and other success indicators. We are fortunate to be in a state that is the leader of LC development through the Washington Center at The Evergreen State College. Faculty need to take advantage of the training that the Center regularly provides.

**Source:**
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Student Services

**Focus:** A Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs considered current trends that will have a dramatic impact on higher education in the United States for the foreseeable future and outlines the implications of those trends for student affairs/services.

To assist the Task Force in its efforts, a review of the following foundational documents: the 1937 and 1949 versions of The Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education [ACE], 1937, 1949), the T.H.E. (Tomorrow’s Higher Education) project’s Student Development in Tomorrow’s Higher Education (Brown, 1972), A Perspective on Student Affairs (NASPA, 1987), The Student Learning Imperative (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 1994), and Learning Reconsidered (ACPA et al., 2004, 2006) was conducted. Although the efforts that produced these documents were prompted by differing circumstances and contexts, five themes are common to all: (1) defining the nature of student affairs/services work, (2) developing and expanding theories and research to inform practice, (3) responding to, and increasing, the diversity of students, (4) demonstrating accountability for student learning and success, and (5) designing and ensuring professional development for effective student affairs/services practice.

**Implications:** Calls for assessment and accountability are not new. What is new is the magnitude and seriousness of the demands that all aspects of higher education provide clear evidence of effectiveness and efficiency.

The use of high-quality data to support decisions about policies, programs, and practices is increasingly expected.

As students demand more flexibility, traditional approaches to providing education and services will be called into question. Without changes to brick and mortar offices, the services provided by student services may be deemed not critical to the education of this growing population. GRCC must continue to evaluate student support services and ways to successfully and innovatively assist students in meeting their completion goals. Tracking the community demographics, high school demographics, and student learning outcomes for current students are all critical best practices for student success.

**Source(s):** Envisioning the Future of Student Affairs, Final Report of the Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs, Appointed jointly by ACPA and NASPA, February 2010.
**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Key Technology Trends and Impacts of Consumerization on Education

**Focus:** The need to communicate and collaborate on a global scale has always been fundamental to the higher education community. The free movement of ideas, regardless of format, is the basis for all higher education activities. New technologies not easily controlled by IT are pushing themselves to the forefront. IT organizations are increasingly dealing with hybrid deployments, including personal and corporate device deployments that connect to corporate applications/network. The "technology-enhanced classrooms" of two years ago may easily be out of date in just the next few quarters, if they are not already. Cloud computing, social media and social networking, mobility and information management are all evolving rapidly. Business unit stakeholders often recognize the value of new technology before IT can harness it. The entire mobile ecosystem is in the middle of revolutionary change. It is particularly pressing in higher education as the last of the digitally semiliterate students graduate and are replaced by more savvy digital media consumers. iPads, media tablets — and mobile devices in general — epitomize this change, IT leaders in the education field must lead the effort to incorporate these devices into the infrastructure while others weave it into new and more exciting curricula. The traditional problems of access control and security remain. With some devices running a mobile version of Microsoft Windows 7, some on the Android operating system and others on Apple's iOS, rarely will one solution fits all. Mobile computing devices such as laptops or notebooks are not new on campuses, but tablets are different; they are optimized for rich media and graphics, and that will increase demand on network bandwidth around campus. These technological evolutions in the workplace are largely happening despite the controls IT normally places on the use of technologies. Cloud and social computing are allowing collaboration, and a shift in behavioral patterns of users and the communities in which they work. Mobility offers new access channels to applications and data, and at the same time provides end users with a wide variety of device choices. The combination of cloud, social computing and mobility can be used to increase geographic diversity and raise productivity. Users expect to get access to personal, work, business applications and data from any device, anytime and anywhere. IT organizations must respond to all of these demands while balancing security against access, and continuing to meet the expectation of individuals who are more technology-savvy than ever before.

**Implications:**
- Green River will need to develop and manage a flexible network infrastructure to allow access to anything, anytime and anywhere. Preparing to deal with the security and bandwidth issues that varying devices (BYOD) bring to the enterprise. Ensure that the college footprint on personal mobile devices is secured and controllable, in accordance with IT security standards.
• Green River will need to develop a mobility strategy and reassess the number and placement of Wi-Fi points as more and more faculty members begin to use mobile devices and rich media in their classes.
• Encourage the use of device-neutral applications in the classroom, such as collaboration tools and common-format multimedia.

Sources:


**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Community and Technical College Budgets

**Focus:** This study considers national trends relating to community college revenues and expenditures using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 1999-2009. Historically, community and technical colleges (CTC’s) have had a steady growth in enrollment over the past 40 years. The CTC’s, however, have had to rely on the ebb and flow of state and local appropriations that do not always match the need brought on by changes in unemployment and economic downturns. Overall, the percentage of operating budget revenues coming from state appropriations has declined with this trend seemingly continuing. Though faring better than the 4-year colleges, decreased revenue has caused CTC’s to reduce expenditures and operate in a lean matter therefore, causing colleges to be more “cost conscious” (p. 172). The underlying costs per student have risen due to rising cost of technology, student services (particularly for underrepresented students), and reliance on financial aid. In an ever-increasingly competitive system, CTC’s are trying to be all things to all people in an effort to help the communities in which they serve and provide greater access for underserved students. The need for accountability has also impacted administrative costs. The development of online courses has additionally stretched the budget. These costs are occurring at a time when enrollments increase, particularly from students who cannot attend a 4-year college due to financial restrictions as well as recent high school graduates and workers needing retraining.

**Implications:** To address some of these rising expenditures during lean economic times, the authors suggest further research and analysis in the following areas as well as some preliminary recommendations:

- **Online learning:** offer online degree programs can be offered at lower costs but in order to do so, a college needs to employ “disruptive innovation” strategies that rethink the traditional classroom seat-time model.

- **Modern technology:** beware of too much innovation that can increase costs that may outweigh the benefits.

- **Revenue sources:** continue to anticipate a decline in state/local appropriations while enrollments increase. This is the new reality. Raising tuition coupled with providing additional financial aid for underserved populations is the best strategy for maintaining existing missions and access levels. States like California have found out the hard way how rising demand and low tuition are incompatible with providing the level of service necessary to meet the demand of the community.

- **Tuition:** relying on tuition dollars at an increasing rate and considering differentiated tuition rates based on program expense can have a negative effect on meeting the mission of the college and providing access for students. Revenue from tuition dollars are impacted by FTE enrollments so as tuition
increases, more strategies for attracting students need to be employed. However, even increased tuition will be a better deal than what students would experience at the 4-year colleges, particularly if they can live at home.

- Mission creep: beware of offering more expensive, upper-division coursework that can be very costly especially in technical areas.

Source:
Topic: Best Practices/New Directions -- I-BEST

Focus: The Integrated Basic Skills Education and Training (I-BEST) educational model pairs professional/technical programs and basic skills instruction to provide structured pathways for ESL and other basic skills students to college-level, career-oriented certificate and degree programs. This study looked at all 34 Washington community and technical colleges and determined that I-BEST students “had superior educational outcomes compared to other basic skills students who took at least one college-level class” (page 6). In the I-BEST model, the basic skills instructor and the prof/tech instructor provide coordinated, integrated instruction. Additionally, most programs also provide a basic skills support class. An I-BEST coordinator or other support person who works directly with students ensures successful transitions from basic skills to college level work. I-BEST programs help students transition to college and train for high-wage, in-demand jobs.

Implications: Green River should continue its current I-BEST projects and add new I-BEST programs in the high-demand fields. The college needs to provide planning time of up to one year in order for faculty to be adequately trained and prepared to teach in this unique learning community model. The main concern for this program is sustainability as it is expensive to run and because basic skills students are among those least likely to be able to afford college tuition. Students need to be connected to funding sources such as Opportunity Grants and Pell Grants. Additionally, support service personnel need to be informed, trained, and ready to advise and provide resources for I-BEST students in order to support their persistence as they earn professional certificates and degrees.

**Topic:** Best Practices/New Directions -- Washington State CTC’s Administrative System Replacement (ERP/ctcLink) Project

**Focus:** Washington’s CTCs are using an outdated, 30-year-old system — a patchwork of state-provided and locally-developed processes that are uneven, sometimes incompatible with one another, and increasingly labor-intensive to maintain. Data at each college stays at each college instead of being available system-wide. The project name is ctcLink. ctcLink is a new technology foundation providing 21st century services anytime, anywhere for the students, faculty and staff. This project will provide the technological infrastructure upon which educational tools and services of tomorrow will be built. With ctcLink, information will connect and move freely among all 34 community and technical colleges. The inefficient days of double-entry, manual reconciliation, and jumping between programs to get information will be over, with the additional benefit of saving money and time while delivering the services needed in today’s technologically advanced world. This project is underway and in the software vendor selection process. Once the vendor is selected a final timeline will be created for college implementation. In general, once implementation has begun, the project is expected to take about five years. The conceptual framework for the ctcLink project implementation:

- **System Configuration:** Plan, design, build and test the new student, finance and HR/payroll modules selected for implementation in about one year – 2013.
- **Pilot Colleges:** The two "FirstLink" colleges--CCs of Spokane and Tacoma CC--will implement and go live in about one year – 2014.
- **There will be deployment waves subsequent to the pilot.** Our project planning consultant (Gartner Consulting) recommends four deployment waves of about eight colleges each (about 6+ months for each wave) GRCC will be in the first wave of deployments (2015).

**Implications:**

- **Green River will need to actively participate in the design and implementation process of the ctcLink system project.** Colleges and the SBCTC will need to commit the necessary human resources to architect, implement and test the system in a timely and efficient manner, with the understanding that it will require the dedication of many “key” staff members.
- **System customization at the system and campus levels must be minimized and will be considered only as mandated by statutory requirement or a business case that benefits the system as a whole.** This could result in GRCC needing to modify or completely change current operational business processes.
- **An ERP system implementation will require employees to use new software tools and acquire new business skills, making it possible for them to work at a different and possibly higher skill level.**
• GRCC will need to review and change current local technical solutions on campus to meet the new ERP system requirements. Systems that replicate information and processes of the ERP should be eliminated.

Sources:
Moore E., Danford T., Ellis B. (2009), The Development and Analysis of Go Forward Options, Collegiate Project Services Assessment Team
http://www.sbctc.edu/college/it/GoForwardStudyExecSummary.pdf

Ctclink Project Documents (2012), Washington State Board Community Technical Colleges
http://www.sbctc.edu/college/i-ctcLink-Project-Documents.aspx
Accreditation – Standards and Initiatives
(Northwest and Nation),
Exemplary Reports, GRCC Reports and Feedback
Topic: Accreditation -- The Future of Accreditation

Focus:

- Accreditation agencies/commissions have shifted their focus to have institutions demonstrate continuous quality improvement that is rooted in strategic planning and makes effective use of evidence-based assessments.
- Accreditation is expected to show students are gaining something of value.
- Accreditors need to show that there are serious consequences for institutions that have problems meeting the standards.
- External constituent groups are pressuring the federal government to impose greater transparency and accountability from colleges and universities as to how they educate their students.
- Accreditation must be a critical element of strategic planning.
- Society’s value of higher education has shifted from “expanding intellectual capacity” to a consumer-like commodity. Degrees are valued to the extent to which they result in a good paying job.

Implications:

- Green River needs to adopt a culture of evidence-based assessment, planning, and decision-making that is transparent across all areas of the institution. Assessment results need to be made available to internal and external stakeholders.
- Green River should develop measures of student learning outcomes that clearly demonstrate student mastery of both discipline-specific and general education competencies that is transparent and made available to the students and the public. Assessment results need to be made available to the public.

Source:

NWCCU Standards
GRCC NWCCU evaluation reports
Review of NWCCU evaluation reports from other colleges and universities
Current and Trends in Higher Education Enrollment and Completion/Graduation Rates – State and Nation
**Topic:** Current Trends -- Enrollment for the Washington Community and Technical Colleges

**Focus:** The CTC’s have reached their capacity to be able to increase enrollments. In other words, the CTC’s in Washington are operating at full capacity. Students are also bearing the burden of shouldering additional costs for fewer services. Average class size has increased from 20:1 to 23:1, but this appears to be the limit. There is a general consensus among state leaders that 2010-2011 was the high “watermark” as enrollments will start to level off. Academic and pre-college FTES are seeing the most growth. Colleges seem to be offering fewer workforce and basic skills courses. Overall eLearning enrollment has slowed; yet online learning (no face-to-face instruction) makes up 65% of the eLearning offerings with hybrid courses, however, growing in popularity. There has been modest growth in applied baccalaureate offerings, I-BEST, and Opportunity Grants.

**Implications:** This data show that support for pre-college programs is warranted. With the leveling off of enrollments, particularly in workforce, research should be conducted before developing new programs. It is unclear from this article whether the workforce and basic skills reductions occurred because of cost-savings measures due to the recession or as a result of decreased demand.

**Source:**
http://sbctc.edu/college/education/annual_201011_enrollment_rpt_revised2_000.pdf

http://sbctc.edu/college/education/annual_201011_enrollment_rpt_revised2_000.pdf
Strategic Plans from Comparable Colleges, Nearby Colleges and Those with Exemplary Plans

- South Puget Sound Community College
- Big Bend Community College
Topic: Strategic Planning – Big Ben Community College Strategic Plan

Focus: The Academic Master Plan for 2009-2014 is the Strategic Plan for Big Ben Community College. The Plan focuses on the Board of Trustees End Statements while promoting student success and retention strategies. The Strategic plan is reviewed annually, updated biennially, and rewritten every five years. The mission of Big Bend Community College is to serve the educational needs of a diverse population throughout its service district. As a comprehensive two-year community college, the institution works with its partners to provide a variety of educational opportunities, including courses and training for university and college transfer, occupational and technical programs, basic skills and developmental education, community and continuing education, pre-employment and customized training for local business and industry, and support services for students to help promote student access, success and retention. The End States of the College are: (1) Mission -- BBCC is dedicated to our mission; Access -- CBC exists to provide people of the service district with access to educational programs; (2) Access -- BBCC provides quality resources and affordable access to the diverse population of its entire district; (3) Partnerships -- BBCC works with organizations and agencies to enhance access and service for our district population; (4) Student Achievement -- BBCC students and clients develop and achieve their goals supported by the staff and resources of the college and its partners; (5) Climate -- BBCC provides and maintains a climate of purpose, respect, and safety for students, staff, and partners; and (6) Multiculturalism -- The Board will promote a climate of cultural understanding to be reflected in an approach for both students and college employees that results in an attitude of inquiry and openness. (Material in italics added by George Copa)

Implications: Big Bend Community College’s strategic plan provides a context for GRCC to consider. In the past, Big Ben Community College required a number of Monitoring Reports. The new approach for BBC’s strategic plan for 2009-2014 has only three comprehensive reports to the Board of Trustees and community, each reflecting the interrelationships of the BBC’s End Statements. The reports include information and data directly related to Access, Programs, and Outcomes. This strategy offers a broader means to evaluate success. Reducing the number of Monitoring Reports may be something GRCC would consider with regard to the future number of Monitoring Reports and Committees within the College’s strategic plan.

Source(s):
http://information.bigbend.edu/administration/academicmasterplan/Pages/default.aspx
WA CTC Strategic Planning Documents printed by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges
**Topic:** Strategic Planning -- South Puget Sound Community College Strategic Plan

**Focus:** South Puget Sound Community College’s Strategic Plan and Assessment document defines the mission and vision for what the College wants to become over the next decade. The plan reaffirms the values that are necessary to accomplish the plan outcomes. It lays the objectives that represent milestones of mission fulfillment and it establishes indicators that will determine if the College is meeting its milestones. Assessment of the College’s progress toward meeting the plan outcomes are thoroughly embedded within the document and offer operational and tactical planning for continuous updates through linking assessment and planning. *The College’s mission statement is:* South Puget Sound Community College’s mission is to support student success in postsecondary academic transfer and workforce education that responds to the needs of the South Sound region. Core themes in the plan are: (1) Academic Transfer Education – provide educational programs and services that prepare for associate degrees and transfer to baccalaureate institutions; (2) Workforce Education – work in partnership with business and industry to provide educational programs and services that prepare for employment; and (3) Support Student Success – provide educational programs and services that ensure and prepare for ready access to, retention in, and completion of postsecondary educational goals. *(Material in italics added by George Copa)*

**Implications:** The SPSCC Strategic Plan offers a roadmap for GRCC to consider as an alternative to the current plan. The opportunity to see an end product created under the guidance of Dr. George Copa offers GRCC the opportunity to expand, enhance, and edit the current Strategic Plan. South Puget Sound’s plan provides a guiding strategic direction for a more detailed operational and tactical plan for GRCC. The plan offers a comprehensive evaluation of the purpose, involvement, the charge, process, timeline, and recommendations. This plan is focused on a three year timeline versus a longer timeline.

**Source(s):**

[www.spscc.ctc.edu](http://www.spscc.ctc.edu) -- WA CTC Strategic Planning Documents printed by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges
Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC

- Instructional/Academic Plan
- Student Services Plan
- Master Facilities Plan
- Foundation Plan
**Topic:** GRCC Plans -- Instructional Plan and Student Services Plan

**Focus:** GRCC’s Instructional Plan was originally written in 2002 and revised in 2005. In 2006-07, the College purposefully merged a Student Services Plan with the Instructional Plan to demonstrate the institution’s commitment to anticipating and responding to the needs of the community. This plan was last revised in April, 2012. Included in the plan are key trends facing GRCC that were first noted in 2002, updated in 2005 and again refreshed in 2006 using local data, information identified from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and Workforce Education Council data from 2006. The plan details a process timeline, key trends, vision and mission statements, philosophical priorities, six strategic directions and an operational plan. While the original 2002 plan was written in large part to bolster the instructional presence with the College’s Facilities Master Plan, the revised Instruction and Student Services Plan is broader in context, highly measurable and more of a robust plan.

**Implications:** A fully developed Instructional Plan is important for the College and typically would give direction to many other planning efforts including Student Services Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Plan, Marketing Plan and other sub-unit instructional plans. While it is important that the various GRCC plans are not written independent of each other, there is consideration that a stand-alone Student Services Plan should be developed, particularly with Instruction and Student Services reporting to two different vice presidents. The current plan needs to be updated for sure. The environmental scan should be conducted annually and noted as such. While the original plan was more of a wish list of ideas and thoughts, the 2007 version builds strategies, assigns responsibility, and has a timeline, expected outcomes and results. A fully developed Instructional Plan is key to so many important areas of the College such as enrollment, program mix (i.e. basic, academic, professional technical), the development of new programs, and overall instructional direction, to name a few.

**Sources:**

Green River Community College *Instructional Plan 2005*

Green River Community College *Instruction and Student Services Plan 2007-09*
Topic: GRCC Plans -- Facilities Master Plan

Focus - The Facilities Master Plan (FMP) is an integrated facilities planning process that takes direction from the college strategic, instructional and student service plans. Launched in 2001, the FMP is updated every two years to reflect current facilities conditions and respond to emerging state-wide, institutional and community needs and priorities. The current FMP was updated in 2010.

This periodic FMP update process entails:

- Evaluating the ability of campus facilities to serve emerging curriculum needs and their suitability for current instructional and student service functions
- Assessing and ranking the current physical condition of each campus building
- Reviewing the ability of buildings to meet standards for accessibility and public safety
- Updating long range capital project sequencing

In implementing the FMP, the college is moving toward the use of fewer but larger, more efficient buildings. In addition to maintenance and operational benefits, the college will see an improvement in program delivery and flexibility.

The 2012 FMP Update will reflect desired project sequencing for future renovations, replacement, and growth projects over the next several State of Washington funding cycles.

Implications: The key implications for GRCC strategic planning and assessment include:

- The college Mission, vision, and core themes should provide overall direction to the FMP. In the 2010 FMP the principle and ideals include (only a partial list): (1) Reflect the college’s values through its physical environment; (2) Support the incorporation of sustainable opportunities in campus development; (3) Plan for maximum flexibility for adapting to the changing needs of education; (4) Enhance the college’s connections to and with its communities through its physical plants; and (5) Enhance fund raising and development opportunities by improving the image of the college in the community. (Material in italics was added by George Copa)
- FMP Principles and Ideals should be congruent with college Values and Objectives.
- The 2012 FMP Update will reflect the 2012 strategic planning effort.

Source: The Facilities Master Plan is web-based and can be found at: http://www.greenriver.edu/MasterPlan/
Focus:
During the next 2 years the Foundation will focus on two core areas:

1. Removing barriers to student success at Green River.
2. Significantly increasing the Colleges capacity to serve students.

Strategies for Removing Barriers to Student Success

*Increase access to an excellent college education.*

1. Grow the scholarship program from 200 to 250 scholarships. NEW!
2. Fund 20 scholarships targeted to veterans returning from active duty within that 250. NEW!

*Retain students by providing one time crisis funding.*

1. Increase Student Assistance Fund for Emergency (SAFE) program from $10,000 to $20,000 annually.
2. Start up the Veterans Educational Transition (VET) fund by raising a $10,000 initially and committing to an annual goal of $10,000.

Strategies for Increasing the Colleges Capacity to Serve Students

*Provide an increased sense of community, opportunities for connection, and support services for students.*

- Provide $1 million in capital funding to enhance the size and function of the Student Life Building. NEW!

*Increase the number, size, and scope of grants awarded to Green River Community College*

- Raise and spend $10,000 per year to retain a contract grant writer for the college. NEW!

Implications: The key implications for GRCC strategic planning and assessment include:

- GRCC Foundation is focused on raising resources to increase capacity to serve students, enhance physical capacity, and support college’s ability to pursue external funding through grants
- Mission, Vision, and Goals should continue to address access, retention, and student success
• College should continue to build a veteran friendly culture and find ways to support our veteran students and continue to seek community partnerships in this endeavor

• College should continue to pursue external funding through grants and leverage opportunities to build a culture of grants among faculty and staff to help achieve goals

Source: GRCC Foundation Board Minutes and Materials, based on Foundation Board Retreat, September 2011, and subsequent meetings through 2011-2012; Input to planning process by Dr. Deb Casey, Vice President for Student Services, Sam Ball, Dean of Instruction, Capitol Projects, Joanne Martin, Director of Student Services, Kristina Setchfield, VetCorp Coordinator, various student testimonials, and board/staff discussion with community groups and members, faculty, and staff.
Linkage Among All Existing and Developing Plans – GRCC
**Topic:** Linkage of Various Planning Efforts at GRCC

**Focus:** The College has always had various operational and departmental plans. In many cases, these plans have been developed in a formalized manner, in some cases not. Similarly, there have and have not been direct linkages between different planning efforts. Since Green River’s last full accreditation report, the College has made efforts to ensure that all planning, at a minimum, links back to the Strategic Plan. This has served the College well. The next step would be to formalize all of the College planning processes so there is a systematic approach to planning. This would allow constituent groups to link planning efforts with other operational or departmental plans. For example; a comprehensive instructional plan would spin off a detailed recruitment plan, which would bring focus to a marketing plan. Because instruction is core to the College, a detailed instructional plan is a critical piece to any departmental planning effort.

**Implications:** While Green River has various planning efforts that tie to the Strategic Plan, they do not all link together. As part of the Strategic Planning process, a flowchart of operational and departmental planning will need to be developed. This will help departments better deploy resources to meet the overall needs of the College. In some cases, departments may need to go back and readjust planning models to better reflect the strategic direction of the College and linkages to other plans.

**Sources:**
- Green River Community College *Instructional Plan 2005*
- Green River Community College *Facilities Master Plan*
- Green River Community College *Instruction and Student Services Plan 2007-09*
Budget Plan – GRCC
Topic: GRCC Budget Plan

Focus: This report summarizes data gathered from Green River’s annual initial budgets and year-end budget summaries. This data was reviewed to identify trends and to project revenue and expenditure patterns for the next three fiscal years. Observations include impacts of the recent dismal economic condition of the State of Washington which resulted in a 26% reduction in state revenue between 2008 and 2012. During the past two fiscal years (10-11 and 11-12) tuition has increased by 12% each year. The revenue from this increase in combination with record enrollments (to include international student enrollment) has helped to provide the resources necessary to maintain course offerings consistent with demand. While Green River was able to maintain during this time of limited resources, it will be critical to either enhance revenue or to reduce expenditures by refocusing our course offering and service levels.

Implications: As the economy begins to improve, there is uncertainty regarding enrollment. The current trend suggests that State, Worker Retraining and Running Start enrollment will level off or decline slightly. International Programs enrollment is projected to maintain at the current level or grow slowing over the next biennium. The State Board for Community Colleges Biennial Investment Recommendation calls for renewed emphasis on student success to include serving more underserved populations, closing the skills gap, increasing funding for adult basic skills, adoption tools for e-Learning, increase Opportunity Grant funding, and improve student retention and achievement. Green River’s strategic plan is consistent with this direction. Should earmarked funding be provided to address the system’s investment plan, this funding will be significant in providing the resources needed for Green River to achieve its student retention and achievement goals.

The economic slump has also impacted capital project funding. In previous years, Green River has obtained funding for several major construction projects. This funding included equipment and furniture consistent with programmatic needs and building design. Finding resources to address the need for new and/or remodeled facilities will be a challenge. As the need to expand programs to provide for a skilled workforce continues, additional facilities will be required. As the new equipment begins to age, resources will be needed to replacing this equipment.

Source: State Board for Community and Technical College – 2013-15 Biennial Budget Investment Recommendation
http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/general/documents/Tab_4_201315_operating_budget_development.pdf
GRCC Community Perspectives -
Strengths/assets/aspirations, Opportunities and Market
and Weaknesses/Challenges
Topic: Community Perspective -- Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Focus:
The Environmental Scan Community Outreach met with groups and individuals over a four week period from May 30, 2012 to June 20, 2012. Focus was on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the GRCC from a community perspective. Some of the participants met as part of focus groups, some individual interviews, and 2 service groups heard short presentations where they were asked to complete the survey and return them either electronically or by mail. A total of 140 plus people were given the opportunity to complete the survey and 92 were returned. Participants represented a diversity of age, ethnicity, occupations, and GRCC involvement within the college service area. The make up of the focus groups and interviews and number of participants was as follows: Focus Group 1 (10), Focus Group 2 (9), Individual Interviews (5), Auburn Senior Center (6), Auburn Area Chamber Ex Committee (5), Leadership Institute of South Puget Sound (29), Wesley Homes (18), Kent Rotary (7), and Auburn Rotary (3). The categories of questions included: (1) Education included faculty and staff, curriculum, student support, and administration; (2) Environment included facilities, campuses, learning environment, access, parking, and safety; (3) Finance included budget, funding, economic conditions, etc.; (4) Primary Functions included basic mission and purpose of the college; and (5) Community includes outreach, marketing, awareness, partnerships, demographics, and alumni. (Material added by George Copa)

Implications:

- Strong awareness and support of existing tracks; career/tech prep, transfer, AA degrees, etc. and post-secondary education.
- Impressed by quality of instruction; faculty and staff, curriculum, accessibility of faculty and staff.
- Awareness of the level of student support services and commitment to “best for students.” Need to continue and build on that support.
- Strong awareness and support of accessibility, affordability, and outreach to students who may not see GRCC as an option for them.
- Support of Running Start and outreach to students while still in high school to make them aware of advantages and opportunities at GRCC.
- Dealing well with diversity and socio-economic issues & Veterans’ issues & need to build on the successes.
- International programs should be maintained and grown with suggestions to look for funding partners in the countries sending students to GRCC.
• Some expressed concerns about the International programs and want the emphasis to remain on local students.

• Professional/technical workers will continue to be in high demand and GRCC should be partnering with business to learn what jobs they are looking to fill, and match the jobs training to the need.

• Need to be aware, prepare and make best use of changes in technology both in depth of courses, innovation, on campus technology, and access through online instruction/distance learning.

• Awareness of the quality and success of the aviation program & workforce retraining.

• Awareness of the need to prepare and provide for the aging population and the demand that will create in the workplace, healthcare and continuing education.

• Support of Main campus and satellite campuses growth and new facilities. Concerns about whether or not there is land to accommodate growth while preserving the natural setting.

• Pride in the friendly, supportive campus environment.

• Concerns about parking, directional signage, lighting and safety on campus.

• College has strong community support and works hard at community interaction, but needs to continue to work on partnerships and outreach. Strong indication that more/better marketing is needed with focus on bringing people to campus not just for classes but for events. Getting the word out about the scope of everything the college does and its benefit to the community.

• Strong concern about state funding, budget cuts, the economy, rising costs and tuition, the effect it will have on college culture and students. Demand will be higher for low-cost education.

Overall, consistent message from participants was that GRCC has a standard of excellence and needs to continue to look for ways to expand that excellence. GRCC should be the center of excellence in the college system, and let it be known they will accept nothing less.