

Cape Cod
Community College
Strategic Plan 2003

A Philosophical Roadmap

Opportunity
Quality
Integrity

a collective intention"

Cape Cod Community College Strategic Plan 2003

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I) Introduction

This strategic plan provides an overarching framework for Cape Cod Community College (CCCC) fiscal and academic planning for the 2003 - 2008 period. The purpose of the plan is to articulate a statement of institutional values, priorities, and goals, as well as ways to measure our success in meeting these goals. The plan is not a blueprint; it provides the framework for subsequent activity.

Once the CCCC Board of Trustees adopts the plan, an academic planning committee will begin work on a detailed academic master plan which will delve into more specifics about academic programs and resources, including decisions about programs and where new full-time faculty or professional staff should be hired. Criteria to help guide these decisions are suggested in this plan.

II) Process for developing the plan

A special committee of 24 faculty, administrators and staff, appointed by CCCC President Schatzberg in November 2002, prepared the strategic plan. The President charged the Strategic Planning Committee (hereafter, the committee) with addressing the challenges, opportunities and priorities facing CCCC. Appendix A lists the committee members. The committee's work has proceeded through a series of full committee meetings and smaller subcommittee meetings on different topics. The process has been designed to be open and collaborative, while kept to a very tight timetable.

A major part of the work has been done through focus group meetings of members of the committee with external and internal stakeholder groups. Twelve groups were largely defined by career specialties (e.g., Criminal Justice, Healthcare, Business and Entrepreneurship, etc.). An additional 11 focus groups consisted of internal and external stakeholders (for instance, CCCC alumni; the Board of Trustees; faculty; professional and support staff; students; community partners, etc.). The focus groups allowed conversations about the plan to involve all members of the campus and community. Appendix B lists the focus groups. Confidential interviews of key individuals on campus supplemented the focus groups. External consultants were hired to support the work of the committee, to conduct interviews and to facilitate focus group sessions.

At each of the focus group sessions, participants were asked to share their views about three basic topics:

- 1) What does CCCC do best? What is it known for?
- 2) Where would you like to see CCCC go in the future?
- 3) What needs strengthening to best meet the challenges of the future?

Employer and community groups were also asked to identify professional development needs that could be met by the college.

Despite the diverse composition of the different focus groups, consistent themes emerged from the discussions and have helped to shape the findings and recommendations in this report. A summary of the reports with the employer stakeholders was prepared by consultants; that report should be read as a companion to this one. Its content and the recommendations will be essential input to the academic planning process.

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A continuing thread throughout the strategic planning process has been the recognition of the special place that CCCC holds in the community and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While it is a healthy institution with a rich past and an exciting future, the college faces unprecedented challenges as it seeks to maintain its identity as a high quality, community-defined, student-centered place of learning. It will be more important than ever before for all members of the college community- faculty, staff and administrators - to work together to follow through on the strategic plan, to set priorities, to make decisions, and to evaluate outcomes. All members of the committee want to see their work provide the basis for continuing collaborative work on behalf of CCCC, its students, and Cape Cod and the Islands.

III) Context for the plan: Our History, and Our Future

One consensus from the focus groups is that CCCC is best known for its academic liberal arts tradition and for its support for developmental education, professional and career training, and transfer. CCCC is a student-centered institution with an excellent general education program designed to prepare students either for immediate careers or for transfer to four-year institutions. Resources for personal development and citizenship are also available to students as they meet their educational goals. An accessible stepping-stone to higher education for under- prepared students, the college is committed to diversity among students, faculty, and staff in communities of color, economic status, gender and sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture and disability. The career and technical programs support the workforce and economic needs of the Cape and Islands in such fields as hospitality and tourism, healthcare, environmental technology, criminal justice, early childhood education and business. These programs provide opportunities for immediate employment and for transfer to professional and baccalaureate programs.

The college also provides credit and noncredit customized training to meet the continuing educational needs of employees and employers through the Workforce Education Resource Center (WERE). In addition, the college offers a number of "two-plus-two" programs that allow students to complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree at CCCC before moving into the third and fourth years with several different public and private fully accredited institutions on the CCCC campus. Graduate degree programs are also available on the CCCC campus, coordinated by the Cape Cod Center for Graduate Education. These types of partner programs at CCCC are models for the rest of the Commonwealth. In an era of constrained resources, the college partners meet student and employer needs cooperatively through cost- effective programs.

CCCC sits on a main campus in West Barnstable, Massachusetts, with offsite programs at the Hyannis Center, and in Bourne, Harwich, Sandwich, Provincetown and the Islands. Built in 1971, the physical environment is attractive and inviting. However, much needs to be done to modernize and renovate existing space and to add new space. Space once designated to student activities, as well as faculty/staff lounges, has been retrofitted for other functions. As it now stands, space constraints are a serious obstacle to new program development and to potential priorities such as improving the co-curricular environment.

The College is working to identify needs and develop priorities for renovation of its infrastructure. A good deal of work has been done in capital planning, and groundbreaking for a new technology building is scheduled for the fall of 2003, followed by significant improvements to existing facilities. Other new construction projects, although much needed, are 6-10+ years away on the Board of Higher Education (BHE) Strategic Capital program and could be pushed further away because of the state funding problems. In recognition of these factors, the committee has confined its recommendations on priorities in the next five years to those that may be accommodated within the existing space constraints.

Since 1998, credit hour enrollment has been growing steadily despite tuition increases and inadequate state funding. This year, however, credit enrollment was essentially flat, a cause for some concern. Enrollment demand has been inconsistent among programs, with declines in the past few years in technology and some business areas. Although part-time students comprise 65% of enrollments, full time

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equivalent (FTE) enrollment has been growing faster than headcount enrollment, suggesting that students are taking more credits even when they are not full time.

The institution lists 97 separate degree or certificate programs with 24 AA degree concentrations, 34 AS programs, and 38 certificate programs; however, undeclared students represent the largest single "program." In the fall of 2002, approximately half of the student credit hours (SCH) were generated in AA concentrations, slightly less than 30% in AS programs, 17% undeclared, and 6% in certificate programs. Within AA degree concentrations and AS degree programs, around half of the SCH enrollments are in the Division of Humanities & Social Sciences; the remainder is almost equally divided between the Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Division of Business, Health and Extended Studies. Although overall student credit hours are up 17% since 1995, total campus course sections have increased by less than a percent, showing that the campus has had to consolidate resources and cut costs to maintain enrollment access. Although the consolidation has occurred in all divisions, the greatest has been in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Demographically, the towns on Cape Cod and the Islands are projected to continue to be among the fastest growing towns in Massachusetts. At the same time, the economic characteristics of the Cape and Islands are changing because of rapid growth in property values and rising numbers of older and retired citizens. The large tourism and hospitality industries on the Cape and Islands rely heavily on recent immigrant or summer visa employees, economically and educationally disadvantaged populations in need of basic services. Housing prices are driving more young families (with school-aged children) from the Cape. The retirement-age community continues to grow, but the current economy (and the declining value of many pensions) means that many of these individuals seek to augment their retirement with employment of some sort. They also need CCCC, not only for personal enrichment and cultural education, but also for job training and retraining.

The shape and governance of postsecondary education is changing in Massachusetts, as in many other states, driven by declines in state funding and the squeeze on resources. Even as demand for higher education is increasing, the changing state regulatory scene and the downward trajectory of state revenues for higher education are likely to remain serious issues for CCCC.

In the last few years, Massachusetts has failed to increase funding for higher education despite enrollment growth, meaning that CCCC has had to make difficult fiscal choices to maintain program depth. The first-rate internal management of resources at CCCC has helped to weather the crisis. However, the college has increased its reliance on adjunct faculty, and full time positions have been left vacant as a cost savings measure- some because of changes in course load requirements from the statewide collective bargaining agreement and others because of the early retirement incentive program, which prohibited replacement of retiring faculty and staff in the short term. Continuing fiscal stringency and a number of impending retirements mean that reliance on adjuncts will likely continue.

Massachusetts currently ranks 49th in the nation in per capita spending in public higher education. (Healy, B5) The prospects for increases in state funding are not good, and options to consolidate institutions, or to "privatize" them, are being seriously debated in the Commonwealth. At the same time, the number of recent high school graduates who are college-bound continues to increase because of the economy and the difficulty of finding employment without some college education. In addition, changes in statewide high school graduation requirements have taken effect. Beginning in 2003, a high school graduate must pass an exam to receive a high school diploma. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) requirement remains somewhat unsettled at this

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time, but could lead to new distinctions between high school completers (who have passed the course requirements but not the examination) and graduates. All of these developments add to an atmosphere of uncertainty at CCCC. At the same time, the increasing cost of four-year colleges, in combination with more stringent high school graduation requirements, will likely lead more students who want a four-year degree to begin at a community college.

The business community expects CCCC to play a central role in future economic development on the Cape and Islands. Businesses place transfer and basic skills education at the top of their priorities for CCCC, along with greater attention to internship programs to help students transfer their classroom learning into workplace skills. Employers are concerned about fundamentals, particularly writing, communication, computation and technology application skills. Businesses see gaps between what CCCC can do and what it is doing and urge the college to increase flexible scheduling and programming to better meet the needs of the business community. Employers recommend improved marketing of the campus and want closer relationships with the college, including internships, clinical experiences, advisory boards, and job placements.

IV) Animating values for the strategic plan

Central to the strategic plan is a public statement of values and priorities for CCCC - the shared vision of the community about the essential purpose and distinguishing characteristics of the college.

Opportunity, *quality*, and *integrity* are the values that shape CCCC as a student-centered, community-based institution of learning.

Opportunity means open access, affordability, a strong commitment to diversity, and student services that ensure students get the right education for their interests and skills levels. *Quality* means programs and services meet academic standards of excellence for all students. *Integrity* means that the institution treats all of community members - students, parents, faculty, staff, and partners - with respect and ensures that standards are applied consistently and equitably. *Integrity* also means that the institution is well managed, bases goals and priorities on evidence of results, and is accountable for meeting its goals.

The campus has historically claimed to be "student-centered," an aspiration needing continued attention and greater definition. Being student-centered should mean that the institution strives to meet the educational needs of all students, whether they are interested in the liberal arts, are seeking academic preparation for a profession, are enrolled for only one course, or are pursuing skills for a specific job. The types of programs offered should reflect the needs of employers in the community and the needs of transfer institutions. Those needs should help define learning goals and skills in shaping the curriculum.

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V) Strategic Priorities for the Future1.

Focus and strengthen core mission.

The highest priority for CCCC in the next five years is an *improved focus on its core mission* to target scarce resources to areas of current strength and future need. CCCC tries very hard to be responsive to its different stakeholder groups. However, at times decision-making is perceived as ad hoc and reactive, rather than grounded in commonly understood strategic priorities. Academic and financial planning must be integrated to ensure the stability of the core mission and to position the institution for the future. This means concentrating financial resources and future full-time faculty in AA and AS degree concentrations and developmental education programs, which prepare students for academic transfer and careers.

To strengthen its core mission, CCCC must move forward on curriculum review grounded in learning outcomes. CCCC must ensure that all students meet learning goals for computational and communication skills as well as cultural competence. Curriculum review includes reexamining general education goals (currently underway) as well as regularly examining the goals and outcomes for all programs. The curriculum review also provides an opportunity to evaluate how course offerings can be modified or enhanced to support CCCC's diversity goals. Curriculum review must be supported with data so that learning outcomes can be measured and monitored over time. The review should incorporate feedback about student performance from employers and transfer and partner institutions. Options to offer students greater flexibility for individually designed programs that use resources more efficiently should be considered, as long as these programs meet CCCC standards for learning outcomes.

Decisions about adding or deleting offerings and hiring faculty should be based on clearly communicated, consistently applied criteria developed collaboratively by the administration and academic departments. These criteria should be developed as part of the academic planning process that is to follow the strategic plan. As a point of departure for the work of that group, the committee has developed a set of such criteria included as Appendix C to this report.

Community education, apprenticeships and job training programs will increasingly need funding from supplemental contract and grant revenue rather than core resources. The message from the employer focus groups suggests that employers understand this limitation and support the need to set priorities. They also indicate a willingness to help find resources to support internship and job training programs. Continued attention to communication with the business community will help to translate this good will into real commitments and on-going partnerships.

2) Fiscal and enrollment stability.

To pursue its core mission consistent with institutional values, the college must do all that it can to maintain fiscal and enrollment stability. Maintaining a stable foundation of state support will be essential, although state funding alone will not yield sufficient resources for excellence. Overall funding must be stabilized, ideally at a level necessary to support growth with minimal tuition and fee increases.

External funding to augment the core mission must continue to be a priority as it has been thus far. The President, together with the Cape Cod Community College Educational Foundation and other college employees, must continue and expand their comprehensive efforts to increase external funding sources. Tuition and fee increases must be kept as low as possible. The college can continue its commitment to providing access for low-income students if additional financial aid resources are found to accompany any necessary tuition or fee increases.

State regulatory constraints (for instance, on class scheduling, space standards, and program review and approval) need to be mitigated as much as possible to allow local decisions about resource use and priorities. Deregulation has become part of the higher education agenda in other states that are reducing funding and changing governance and should be sought in Massachusetts. To convince new funders to support CCCC, the college needs to develop more robust performance and accountability measures than those currently used by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

While the future bodes well for continued growth in community college enrollment, this growth presents new challenges for the college. All of

the functions of enrollment management (e.g., Admissions, Assessment and Advising, Registration, Business Office and Financial Aid) should be streamlined, administratively and logistically.

At the same time, the college must improve *student recruitment* and *campus marketing*. Sustained attention to recruitment efforts toward middle school and high school students, adults already in the workplace, recent immigrants, and the minority community in particular, are crucial to enrollment stability. Identifying reasons for the decline in the male student population and recruitment of male students should be part of this agenda. Recent trends in housing prices mean that the high school age population could easily stabilize rather than grow.

Another challenge facing the college is the perception by high school guidance counselors of CCCC as a "last resort," rather than a first-choice college for their students. Stepped up recruitment efforts should articulate the college's offerings for talented students, as well as those who are under-prepared. Similar attention should be paid non-profit employers in the community who seek job-training programs for their employees.

Special efforts need to be paid to the needs of low-income students, members of ethnic minorities, and students who are the first generation in their family to attend college. Strategies need to be developed to ensure better integration of the West Barnstable CCCC campus and staff with the population of students at the Hyannis Center, who have difficulty accessing the main campus programs and support services. Opportunities for outreach to immigrant populations can be improved through increases in course offerings in ESOL and interpreter classes on the main campus, as well as at the Hyannis Center.

3) Enhance student success for **all** students.

Inadequate advisement and inappropriate course placement often mean too many students leave CCCC without meeting their educational needs, resulting in high attrition rates for the college. Revitalizing an enrollment management plan might improve advising and retention for all students. Furthermore, the campus must truly welcome diverse student populations. Barriers of language and culture and the self-sufficiency of the Hyannis Center may isolate too many potential students.

4) Nurture and improve campus life.

Despite the constraints of space, CCCC needs to enhance the quality of the campus climate, including its co-curricular life. The college needs to improve its welcoming face to new students and to visitors through creative use of space to compensate for the lack of a recognizable entryway to the campus. More dedicated student space and co-curricular activities are essential to improve the campus climate, particularly for traditional college age students.

The campus climate for faculty and staff needs attention as well. Common space that invites informal collegial contact is hard to find, and increased use of adjunct faculty, more "after hours" classes and increased reliance on email mean that faculty no longer can count on informal face-to-face contact. Internal campus communication needs attention at all levels. Special efforts are needed to include the adjunct faculty in campus wide communication.

The campus community will continue to grow and become more diverse. A coherent definition and plan for diversity will help the college meet its goals to improve campus life.

5) Strengthen linkages to employment community, and improve workforce development.

CCCC needs to do more to meet the needs of the employer community - and students who are currently employed - through flexible scheduling and increased use of learning technology. CCCC needs to make better use of community advisory groups in all academic discipline/program areas. Groups need to be established, or, if they exist, energized or reconfigured to make them more effective. The institution should promote courses that emphasize work ethics and professionalism. Opportunities to expand job training and internship programs through contract or grant funding should be pursued based on improved communication with the business community throughout the college's service area.

6) Improve campus communication and marketing at every level.

A consistent theme in all of the focus groups has been the need for much better ongoing communication among CCCC, partners, community and employer groups through frequent, reliable public information. A marketing plan, complete with assessment and analysis, would strengthen the college's image and recruitment efforts. This plan should identify resources and develop strategies for streamlining internal and external communications.

In addition to traditional external communication media, the college should improve the functionality of its website to allow people on and off campus to access up-to-date, consistent and reliable public information. In addition, efforts should be made to allow individuals to use the website to interact with the registrar, financial aid, and business offices.

The college should increase the visibility of showcase programs that have high employment potential and/or reputations for excellence. CCCC's image needs to be maintained and improved with all partner institutions, targeting, for example, new students from among mid-career professionals on the Cape and Islands and employees in the public schools.

Alumni outreach, beyond fund-raising, should be more robust, as CCCC alumni are some of the best potential ambassadors - and recruiters - for the campus. Responsibility for marketing does not reside in a single individual or office; it extends to all staff and faculty who come into contact with groups in the community. Marketing and communication efforts need to be coordinated, and should emphasize the values, priorities and strengths outlined in this plan.

7) Strengthen use of data; improve internal and external accountability.

CCCC has a culture of sporadic and inconsistent use of analytical data to make decisions. This hurts internal communication, thwarts consistency in planning, and hampers sustained internal and external accountability. The institution needs better methods of knowing whether it has met its goals. In turn, it needs to communicate its successes to all constituencies.

To improve accountability, the college should monitor implementation of this plan's strategic objectives. While some of these measures include attention to policy, internal communication, and other forms of assessment, others rely on data already collected at CCCC. Still others will require new initiatives. Several of these measures may be utilized for more than one goal; their implementation will keep the college's focus on this plan. Suggested measures include the following:

Enrollment and course taking trends Course completion, second year retention, degree and certificates awarded. Enrollment of recent high school graduates from the service area; participation of adult population in service area.

Funding trends

State support, tuition and fees per headcount and full time enrollment; external fundraising.

Student exit data

Follow-up interviews with students who initially take more than one course and who do not reenroll to learn whether their goals were met; develop other measures of success, in addition to retention figures, graduation rates and certificate awards.

Student transfer data

Trends in transfer to four-year institutions for students who have successfully completed at least 12 transferable credits at CCCC and for whom transfer is a goal; success in baccalaureate attainment of students who have transferred; increases in course articulation agreements with four-year institutions.

Student satisfaction indicators Student feedback on advising and other student services and academic success; student feedback on satisfaction with distance learning course delivery systems.

Faculty and staff demographics Degree to which faculty/staff reflect the demographics of the service area; ratio of full time/part time faculty

Existing student follow-up data Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Report; the National Student Clearinghouse Program.

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V) Conclusion

This plan is meant to be a framework for further activity at Cape Cod Community College. Follow-up work is important in four key areas of concern in this report:

1. Curriculum review
2. Academic advising
3. Communication and marketing
4. Diversity

Finally, the committee recommends that the President and the Board of Trustees monitor the implementation of this plan by asking the strategic planning committee to reconvene to review plan implementation at the end of one year.

Approved by the Cape Cod Community College Board of Trustees, May 15, 2003.

Appendix A:

List of committee members

Patricia Allen

Bruce Bell

Dee Burlin, Co-Chair

Joyce Chasson

Hemant Chikarmane

Michael Dallaire

Diane De La Riva

Jim Doherty

Agustin Dorado

Lisa Fedy

Jeanmarie Fraser, Co-Chair

Bill Graziadei

Gail Guarino

Elizabeth Lehr

Maribeth Malloy

Bob Mason

Barbara Murphy

Debra Murphy

Rose PenaWarfield

Sally Polito

Cheryl Rambert

Kerry Sullivan

Michael Tritto

Negash Yusuf

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Appendix B:

Focus Groups for the Strategic Planning Process

Employer-Centered Groups¹

Criminal Justice

Business and Entrepreneurship

Healthcare

High Tech

Arts, Language and the Humanities

Human Services

Science and Technology

Hospitality, Culinary, Recreation and Tourism

Education

Trendsetters

Applied Technology

Fire Science and EMT

Campus, Community and Partner Stakeholder Groups²

Professional and Support Staff

2+2 and Graduate Partners

High School/Middle School representatives

Non-Unit Administrators

CCCC Students

CCCC Faculty

Non-Profit Community Groups

People of Color, Minorities, Underserved

Board of Trustees

Department Chairs (individual interviews)

CCCC Alumnae

¹ Facilitated by Beverly and Michael Ryle, Center for Career and Business Development, North Eastham, MA.

² Facilitated by either Jane Wellman or Jamie Merisotis, Institute for Higher Education Policy, Washington, D.C.

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Appendix C:

Proposed Criteria for Adding and Subtracting Programs

Criteria for adding new programs:

- Consistency with general directions and institutional priorities set by the strategic plan.
- Evidence of sufficient and durable student and employer demand from workforce projections, data collected from area employers, evidence of past student requests for programs, and enrollment data from other program providers.
- Strong employer, community support/collaboration.
- Compatibility with existing program offerings and faculty, such as capacity to meet needs for general education/core courses or program specific courses with existing staff.
- Good cost/benefit ratio—i.e., the salaries students can expect to receive compare favorably with the time and cost of the education.
- Capacity to find qualified faculty to teach in the program.
- Room to house the program appropriately.
- Library, equipment, and computer resources appropriate for the program.
- Outside funds to support the program so it will not take resources from existing priorities—provided the program meets the criteria above.

Criteria for subtracting programs:

- Funding reductions requiring consolidation or elimination of programs to protect higher priorities.
- Insufficient student demand.
- Insufficient employer or community interest.
- Loss of capacity to ensure minimum standards of quality.
- Capacity to meet needs for the program through other means.
- Insufficient campus administrative and support infrastructure for the program.
- Necessary diversion of resources from program to other, higher priorities central to the college's core mission.
- Probability that the demand for the program is cyclic and may return.
- Effect of elimination of the program on the core mission of the college.

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Appendix D:

Additional Information Resources and Works Cited

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