Designing Tomorrow, Today

White Paper
Strategic Planning Session I
October 18, 2016

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As the first step in a process to develop a new strategic plan based on the broad-based involvement of ICC employees and community stakeholders, the first of three employee input sessions was held on October 18, 2016. This paper documents the dialogue of 86 ICC employees. Employees were given four distinct data scenarios describing the changing nature of the district ICC serves and asked to answer questions concerning the impact of these conditions on the future direction of the College. The four data briefs included:

- Changing Industries, Changing Jobs
- Knowing Our Market
- Poverty and Education in District 514
- Workforce Healthcare Demographics

These data briefs can be found on the strategic planning page on ICC's website at icc.edu/scenarios/

Two additional sessions are planned to garner ICC employee insights into the College's situation and guide the development of the new strategic plan. Session II will be focused on the completion of a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis for the College. Session III will be dedicated to exploring practices and models utilized by other community colleges in an effort to improve levels of student completion and success. The Strategic Planning Conference, which includes community stakeholders as well as representative ICC employees, will be held in March 2017.   The Board of Trustees will be presented with the College's new Strategic Direction and Goals for 2017–2021 at the June 2017 Board Meeting.

The high-level outcome of this session was a consensus among participants that the College will need to change to successfully respond to the changing nature of our community, workforce, and students. The following categories represent the broad consensus around themes resulting from the *Designing Tomorrow, Today* planning session.

- Outreach to Potential Students
- Partnering for Success
- Designing Programs that Position Students for Success
- Approaches to Supporting Students
- Positioning ICC for the Future

These themes are each addressed individually in the following pages of this paper.

Outreach to Potential Students

Many commented that Outreach (often termed Marketing by respondents) could include younger students as well as their parents. Outreach to potential students was a common thread throughout all four scenarios. Comments such as "market to parents, children who are in grade school and middle school, and aggressively recruit students who are high-level students as shown by their ACT and SAT scores" were voiced. Outreach to students prior to high school may provide them a "realistic vision of attending college" and even allow for "families to get involved in school." If ICC does not involve parents, "students will no longer value higher education as there will be no modeling of parents – wanting their offspring to be more educated than them." ICC has to show the value of education. ICC has "financial viability" for students who fear incurring debt with student loans and fear the high cost of education.

Attendees frequently noted that ICC could follow students after they graduate or transfer. These results could then provide support for sharing the success of our graduates with the community. Comments were repeatedly voiced that ICC could reach out and find out how well our students are doing after they graduate or transfer. ICC could proudly display our graduates' successes in obtaining jobs and making a living wage that supports a family. These types of outreach efforts may change the reputation of ICC from an "extension of high school" to "a college" that enables "future successes."

Many attendees voiced that ICC could reach out more to area businesses and industries. Reaching out to students alone is no longer enough to sustain and propel ICC forward in a competitive market. Other institutions, including local nursing colleges and local technical schools, "out-market us" because ICC's programs seem "old and stale," as compared to "trendy and fresh." ICC has to reinvent itself because how ICC looks today is not how the region needs us to look. ICC has to "recruit for high-demand programs" that businesses and industries tell us they need. They should "drive our marketing." Our outreach has to be responsive, and we have to "use our technology to be responsive." Using "live chats" and being able to respond at "2:00 a.m. are what our customers expect." ICC needs to "be proactive, not reactive."   A proactive ICC knows that the growing "unemployment . . . low economic growth" means unskilled workers will not contribute to "growth in our district."   If "education levels continue to decrease poverty levels will rise, along with crime [and] not enough trained workers [leading to] increased stress on social services." ICC can change this through "community outreach, stronger relationships with schools, [and] partnerships."

ICC could focus more on offering services to workers who need to retrain. Because workforce needs are changing and the population is aging, ICC is missing a potential student pool when it does not focus on offering its services to workers who need new skills or workers who are retiring soon and would like a second career. Business and industry may want workers who are looking for a "second career or third career" so ICC should make itself an education provider who can train the workers today for the community we serve tomorrow.

Partnering for Success

ICC's partnerships have to reach many stakeholders including "relationships with community leaders, business owners, homeowners, [and] educators." More partnerships mean more opportunities for students. "Get the community on our side" is a common theme among many comments. If "ICC has more partnerships" then apprenticeships and "more specialized programs for industry will emerge."   Partnerships will also increase ICC's adjunct faculty pool because "new programs demand new skills." Ignoring new partnerships may mean "missed opportunities. MTI [Midwest Technical Institute] and Methodist [Methodist College Unity Point Health] offer faster degrees." ICC offering "health careers as a dual credit class[es] in the high school" is an opportunity to build partnerships in the health care industry and in high schools.

We need to develop "partnerships that develop our mission." If not, "we will be less relevant as an education[al] option." ICC faces a risk that students will go elsewhere for training. Expanding partnerships is "for the sake of student jobs and placement." "With no training, workers will not be able to be as efficient or [there won't be] enough workers to fill positions with additional retiring population."   ICC needs to "expand beyond partnering with healthcare areas such as nursing." The College has to "consider healthcare support programs: IT, Business/Marketing/ Administration, Clerical." Service areas need workers. In fact, ICC could "arrange to get [a] current list of companies that need students for jobs." In addition, focus on rural communities; ICC could "impact [the] area agricultural industry." Developing partnerships is crucial to reducing poverty in both the rural areas and Peoria.   In fact, "frequent conversations with area employers to project their needs ahead of time" could happen, and this may develop "reciprocal relationships with employers."

Community outreach is essential. "If ICC performs community outreach, potential students will see ICC has resources to help impoverished students manage and complete an education." ICC could "address how to come from poverty and go to college." This starts by developing partnerships with providers of early education programs. Think about the possibilities of grade school students taking a "field trip to ICC." Youth could be engaged. ICC "need[s] to partner with high schools, maybe even middle schools, to get students to understand that college IS important." Partnering for ICC may need to extend beyond educational environments and extend to "area social services." Partnering with "Big Brothers and Big Sisters" may be possible. ICC could "collaborate with [the] Dream Center, Boys & Girls Clubs, Crittenton Centers, and have alumni speak." These partnerships will foster students' interest in ICC at a young age. Then, by the time these students reach high school, ICC is positioned with "stronger articulation programs . . . [that include] faculty and students from ICC talking to high school students." "Peoria Promise is an opportunity" that students can embrace because "college is possible, even for those who are in poverty." Together "teachers work with parents from primary schools and middle schools to make sure all students K-12" are situated to attend ICC. In addition, ICC needs to focus on "why they [students] are not coming to ICC." Knowing who is coming and the skills students need could inform ICC's academic programs. Keeping "TRiO helps students."

Designing Programs that Position Students for Success

As ICC positions itself in a crowded academic market, institutionally we need to ask ourselves: "Are there current programs that align with hospitals, nursing care facilities, warehouse centers, construction machinery manufacturing, and full-service restaurants?" Students will come if we offer the programs, courses, and schedules they demand. An opportunity for ICC to develop an "awareness of new job opportunities for jobs of the future (i.e. analytics)" exists. For example, one area of programming may be to "offer a course to help community workers who want to become managers – could be certificate or degree program." ICC may consider "separate skilled vs. nonskilled programs . . . offering more PDI approaches/certificate programs, and offering more short-term programs." The benefit of "stackable credentials" could be realized. "Programs that fit 12- to 35-year-olds" are possible. Examples may include addressing teacher shortages by "educating more educators" and preparing "science/math teachers, [who are] hard to find." Work with legislators to "develop 4-year degree or offer bachelor degrees in Applied Sciences" or "speed internal process to create new programs and certificates." These new programs are critical in technology fields. ICC could "tie in computer technology skills (e.g. keyboarding - they still need typing skills)." ICC may consider how to "invent careers to match health care to IT." A more comprehensive design may be to "consider [a] regional approach to high-demand programs." As technology changes, ICC may grow by "more technology offerings (i.e. drones flying technicians)." ICC's future may include "cybersecurity jobs" programs. The need to train "entrepreneurships for tech and industry" could be actualized through a "basic business incubator space for small business" as well as a "fast track for market analysis to start a business." Creative approaches include "[becoming] a national training center for future jobs, or current first responder jobs, or simulation training for health care. Similar to JUMP." "What skill sets are needed? Reach out." Designing programs for the future means "today's children will be working [at] jobs not yet created."

ICC could "first be knowledgeable of future predictions" then offer the right programs at the right time in the right mode and the right format. ICC could offer more courses beyond 16-week classes. For example, ICC could offer "12-week classes, go year round, done faster" or more broadly stated, consider "weekend programs and night programs." More to the point, ICC may want to consider "pathways for year-round schooling and flexible scheduling (8-week, 6-week, 4-week)." ICC could streamline course sequencing, "offer more relevant courses, and Fastrack" courses. "Flexible scheduling" may allow for more student access. "Students have to work – need more online classes so can do both and afford school." Other course ideas to consider include expanding "hybrid courses, dual credit courses," and creative approaches such as pricing structures for courses - "offer 2 for 1 (educate parent and child for cost of 1)." ICC runs the risk of not growing. Making sure ICC offers programs and courses "in meeting its mission" may mean we "look closely at program vitality, review and close programs or reworked (sic) to fit the needs of the future." ICC is operating in a time where if "ICC cannot grow its own programs – if ICC does not, someone will." Students will benefit from ICC "know[ing] the trends in [the] market to attract more population to get education to offer long-term success and careers." Questioning "are we bound to IAI . . . and work[ing] with neighboring community colleges and ICCB to insure no unnecessary duplication, but more regional programs" may be within scope for ICC's future.

Approaches to Supporting Students

Some may believe students "have entitlement issues" while some believe "students need more." In a broad context, students "must know options." Often these options may be presented through "mandatory orientation or a mentoring process for students with advising checkpoints." Providing comprehensive advisement with "early intervention, career services" may serve students. Students today may want "support services available beyond 9-5" or may want "concierge service" which is intended to "navigate students." These are traditional services available to students after they enroll. The educational environment may now be seen as a place where students need services beyond enrollment and advising. Services that "offer transportation, financial assistance beyond federal financial aid," including "financial aid literacy for students, affordable childcare services, meal plan for students, textbook rentals, discount on student housing, shuttle to North, debt forgiveness, paid internships, food pantry, and free textbooks" may be services that keep students in school and may be "services needed to attract students." When students "face barriers" and "cannot fulfill basic life needs," school becomes impossible. Even if students find their way to ICC, they still face barriers such as "not understanding college speak [or] how processes work. Students are busy and have to work and attend school." Students "need full-time advisors who can help them respond to socioeconomic pressures that affect their degree progress." Yet, the services and resources that we do offer are likely not fully known by our potential or even current students.

ICC could also recognize barriers that we did not create. For example, potential students may have a "fear of college, stigma of college education, lack of life skills in our youth – not prepared for rigor of education, difficult environment in high school, racial/ethnic comfort level, lack of computer skills and typing skills, and need for mental health, wellness, ability to cope, and manage priorities." Yet, on the other side, some students come to ICC with "entitlement issues and lack of motivation." The value of education early has to be actualized. With "less interest in education," more demands from students, "a shrinking population," and "migration out of Illinois," ICC can create new opportunities by focusing on the community's workforce needs and making sure we are stable internally.

Positioning ICC for the Future

ICC is positioned in a geographic area that is facing a "shrinking labor/workforce." Yet, an increased need for healthcare workers has been documented. Are there "too many hospitals?" Or do we have "too many workers with no one to serve?" Given that we have a "migration out," then "enrollment and class size will shrink." Further, we cannot "predict CAT – area depends on them." Our "population could shrink." Still, we have talent. We have possibilities. We have to "stop being complacent." What if "every employee is an ambassador." We have to "change or perish." In fact, "if ICC does not grow [we have] – fewer full-time faculty" and we "grow or we lose students for transfers to 4-year institutions." Growing means recruiting qualified employees who can teach in high-demand programs. Growing means "remove enrollment barriers [and] barriers in developmental education courses." This includes re-looking at college readiness such as the "18/81 College readiness score." Growing may mean "offering sports programs for youth" to get them excited about college. Growing means continuing to offer programs and courses that meet student needs. Growing means creating a "pathway for one or two classes at a time for students who cannot afford full time."

Because we know cost is a barrier, what if we "reduce cost for student(s) to become more competitive?" A danger of "increased tuition" is lower enrollment, which could mean "fewer employees" and possibly result in "loss of quality people" and eventually "loss of accreditation." Looking to our future means asking and answering some difficult questions such as are "sports necessary? Housing necessary? Offering too many classes?" As we move forward, we have to ask "Do we know our students?" Do we have untapped markets such as international students? Do we have untapped adjunct pools waiting to teach newly created programs? "Do high school students know what they want?" ICC "could change – do not know future." But we know our past. "Veteran employees need to meet with President and provide history." As decisions are made, "employment data, retention and completion data, and transfer data" could be used. We need "data to know trends at other schools and national trends for employment." In short, let "data drive program decisions."