

North Orange County Community College District
Strategic Conversation #7
“Inventing the Future – Our District Strategic Plan”
Refreshments at 4:30 p.m. & Strategic Conversation at 5 p.m. March 28, 2006
Buena Park Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center
7000 Beach Blvd., Buena Park
Background Paper

History & Purpose

Strategic Conversations have been held in the North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD) since 1999 to encourage communication and interaction between staff, community, and Board of Trustee members. The comments and ideas shared at these informal conversations are compiled into follow-up reports, which serve as a reference for the Board as it addresses future policy matters.

Representatives from Cypress College, Fullerton College, and the School of Continuing Education (SCE) take turns planning and conducting each of the conversations. Strategic Conversation #7 is being planned by Cypress College around the topic of “Inventing the Future – Our District Strategic Plan.”

Why This Topic?

The NOCCCD Strategic Conversation provides a ready-made format for gathering additional internal and external community input important for shaping the new District-wide Strategic Plan. This year’s topic of strategic planning also transitions naturally from last year’s topic, “Serving the Community – Measuring Up” for which we investigated ways the NOCCCD strives to fulfill the multi-faceted mission of community colleges and continuing education programming in a changing world.

What Is Our Strategic Conversation Purpose?

The purpose of Strategic Conversation #7 will be to review and add to a variety of data already collected in the District’s Strategic Plan process in order to address the following two questions:

- What are the top findings related to the quality of services that need to be addressed by the NOCCCD?
- What can we do – *what are the strategies* – to lead to significant and enduring changes in these areas?

Where Will We Start?

Strategic Conversation #7 will give us the opportunity to discuss some of the significant trends in higher education, which are highlighted below. To this conversation, we also will bring perceptive data from our internal and external stakeholders, which are the focus of other large-group processing taking place in the District shortly before Strategic Conversation #7.

Trend in Higher Education: Escalating Demand for Postsecondary Education

- The growth of the economy will require a better-educated workforce.

- It is estimated that about 50% of first-time community college students are under-prepared to be successful in their studies, according to “Keeping America’s Promise.”
- Population demographics are changing to include more diversity and older adults.
 - The largest growing part of the population is Latino, which typically has a lower college-going rate.
 - Many adults who would not otherwise do so, will be returning to school without basic skills.
 - Many other adults will become underemployed because of skill-set changes in the workforce or need to return to the workforce to supplement income.
- In our District’s county, the pressure will be on our population to:
 - Continue expansion of the economy and sustain job growth in all clusters except defense/aerospace.
 - Grow employment in health, business, and professional services as well as construction and tourism.
 - Maintain a competitive advantage in business and professional services.
 - Maintain a competitive advantage in manufacturing (although negatively impacted by the state’s less competitive position).
- For our District, this could mean:
 - Increased emphasis on basic skills, including English As A Second Language.
 - Increased emphasis on student support services for prospective (high school) and current students.
 - Curriculum changes to reflect evolving workforce skills.
 - Faculty staff development to work with diverse population and returning adult populations.
 - Partnerships with K-12, businesses, and other community organizations.

Trend in Higher Education: Continuously Changing Student “Mix”

- The student population will change to include more:
 - Diversity – students of color, English-language learners, first-generation college students, adult students, and economically disadvantaged students.
 - Non-traditional students – financially independent, enrolled part-time, working full-time, enrolled after a delay following high school, with dependents, as single parents, and/or without a high school diploma.
- Despite an enrollment decline today, the Campaign for College Opportunity forecasts a population explosion among the state’s college-age population (18-24) in the next decade, to 4.26 million.
- In our District:
 - More than 75% of our current students also have jobs.
 - Currently, 72,000 people within our service area ages 5 to 64 are not English speakers.
 - By 2009, 138,114 people in our service area will not have a high school diploma.
 - Our county’s Latino population will be a plurality in 2020, at 41%, and a majority by 2050, at 53%.

- For our District, this could mean:
 - Greater emphasis on providing learning opportunities appropriate for returning adults and non-traditional students (such as distance programming or shorter terms).
 - Operational changes to accommodate a larger number of students overall, including projected increase in the number of traditional students.
 - More financial aid or scholarship opportunities for part-time students.
 - More emphasis on support services for non-traditional students and partnerships with community organizations.

Trend in Higher Education: Funding Squeeze

- Funding does not mirror enrollment changes and does not reflect the higher costs to serve diverse student groups.
- The Campaign for College Opportunity in California commissioned a study, concluding that:
 - Investments in higher education result in substantial benefits for the individual and state.
 - If the state increases the number of college graduates, California's individual incomes will increase. If it doesn't, the opposite will occur:
 - For every new \$1 the state invests to get more students in and through college, it will receive a net return on investment of \$3.
 - The state faces a net loss of \$2 in the long run for every \$1 it fails to spend in the short run.
- In our District, we participated in a county-wide socioeconomic study that concluded:
 - The county's community colleges provide benefits to communities, taxpayers, and students that far exceed what they cost to operate.
 - Our community colleges help to stimulate the state and local economy, leverage taxpayer dollars, generate a return on investment, and increase students' earning potential.
 - Communities as a whole benefit even more than students alone from the education provided by community colleges. (If the colleges did not exist, taxes actually would have to be raised to compensate for the contributions the colleges make to the communities.)
- For our District, this could mean:
 - Greater emphasis on successful high-school-to-college transitions.
 - Broader and more diverse student recruiting efforts.
 - Greater emphasis on college completion for those starting a program.
 - Advocacy for more equitable funding mechanisms.

Where Does the Strategic Plan Process Go From Here?

Input from Strategic Conversation #7 will be combined with perceptions and data being gathered from many sources in the District and beyond to inform the Strategic Plan that ultimately will be adopted by the NOCCCD Board of Trustees. Following more work in April and fine-tuning in May, a proposed Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees at its June regular meetings.

For updates on the NOCCCD Strategic Plan process, please visit the District website at www.nocccd.edu

Dr. Jerome Hunter, NOCCCD Chancellor, also will continue to provide periodic updates on the Strategic Plan process in letters to employees.

Trends in Higher Education Information Sources:

- “California Community Colleges System Strategic Plan,” January 2006
- “The Economic Contributions of the Orange County Community College Districts,” December 2005, CCbenefits Inc., Co-Sponsored by Orange County Community College Districts
- “Keeping America’s Promise: A Report on the Future of the Community College,” 2004, Education Commission of the States and the League for Innovation in the Community College
- “North Orange County Community College District School of Continuing Education Community Scan,” 2005
- “Orange County Workforce 2005: Can OC’s Prosperity Survive?,” November 2005, Orange County Business Council
- “2005 Orange County Community Indicators,” March 2005, Co-Sponsored by the Orange County Business Council
- “Return on Investment: Educational Choices and Demographic Change in California’s Future,” December 2005, University of California, Berkeley, Co-Sponsored by Campaign for College Opportunity

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Strategic Plan Updates
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