

Strategic Transformation Planning Summary
Board of Visitors Listening Session
March 19, 2025

The listening session conducted by Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) with its Board of Visitors provided insights emphasizing the need for bold, transformational actions to guide the college's future direction, mission and strategic transformation plan. This narrative highlights key findings from the discussion, organized into thematic sections.

Vision and Positioning

Board members called for bold leadership in positioning Tri-C as a transformative educational force capable of driving Cuyahoga County from poverty toward sustained prosperity. There was a strong call to proactively engage potential students and their families early, clearly establishing Tri-C as the preferred affordable and high-quality educational choice. One participant emphasized that Tri-C should be "*in the homes of students early on,*" reshaping perceptions of community college education. Additionally, Tri-C was encouraged to step boldly into a leadership role, becoming a pivotal convener between educational institutions, businesses, and community organizations. Members recommended transformational efforts to tackle systemic challenges, stating the importance of addressing "*declining literacy rates*" and engaging students who might traditionally be underserved. Emphasis was placed on creating meaningful, transformative experiences and clear employment pathways, as one participant noted, "*Students must see a clear pathway between coursework and employment.*"

Distinctive Strengths and Mission

Members recognized Tri-C's unique position as an inclusive, accessible, and affordable educational provider with expansive educational programs across diverse campuses. Participants highlighted the institution's openness, noting "*Tri-C is open to all students, regardless of background,*" and advocating for leveraging this inclusive approach to become a significant resource for social impact. Strategic partnerships with major

employers were identified as transformative strengths, with one participant pointing to connections with "*dozens of major employers*" as crucial for robust career pathways. The college's innovative non-credit offerings were also cited as pivotal entry points, offering students essential tools for career advancement and social mobility.

Critical Skills for Student Success

The Board emphasized the need for transformational educational programs embedding critical competencies necessary for thriving in contemporary and future job markets. Bold educational initiatives aimed at significantly enhancing communication, literacy, and critical thinking skills were highlighted. Participants consistently mentioned "*critical thinking skills*" as vital, alongside effective problem-solving abilities. The necessity of adaptability, resilience, and teamwork was underscored, equipping students to "*activate what they learned*" and adapt effectively to changing workplace demands. These transformational skills are intended to ensure graduates remain competitive, relevant, and innovative contributors to the workforce.

Institutional Values and Innovation

Participants underscored embedding innovative and progressive values into Tri-C's institutional culture. The responsible and strategic integration of artificial intelligence was noted as a critical transformational opportunity, emphasizing the importance of "*responsible use of AI.*" Board members strongly advocated for deeper collaboration and partnerships to enhance student engagement, highlighting curiosity, inclusivity, and equity as essential values. Participants also stressed embracing calculated risks and viewing "*learning failures*" as integral steps toward innovation, fostering a culture supportive of experimentation and continuous improvement.

Strategic Opportunities

Members emphasized transformative opportunities Tri-C could leverage to significantly impact community needs. Strategic initiatives aimed at preparing substantial numbers of students for high-paying, in-demand jobs and significantly enhancing career mobility through targeted upskilling were highlighted as essential. The proactive engagement of unemployed and underemployed populations was seen as a bold strategy, noting the importance of "*upskilling incumbent workers to drive career mobility.*" Educational innovations such as comprehensive literacy programs and initiatives like Elder University

were identified as transformative approaches, significantly enhancing community engagement and institutional prominence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the listening session highlighted a compelling mandate for bold and transformative actions at Tri-C. By proactively embracing its role as a leader and convener, strategically embedding critical skills and institutional values, and ambitiously pursuing innovative community opportunities, Tri-C is poised to significantly elevate its social impact, community relevance, and institutional success, creating sustained and transformative benefits for Cuyahoga County.

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For any questions regarding the listening session or this summary, please reach out to [Gregory Stoup](#), Vice President of Institutional Progress and Effectiveness.