

Summary of the Foundation Board's Strategic Transformation Planning Session (February 20, 2025)

The Tri-C Foundation Board's strategy session revealed a deep commitment to addressing the evolving needs of students and the broader community. A strong consensus emerged around the urgency of adapting to enrollment challenges, economic shifts, and workforce demands through strategic partnerships, innovative programming, and enhanced student support services.

Key themes included the importance of affordability, accessibility, and removing barriers such as food and housing insecurities. The introduction of applied bachelor's degrees and diverse revenue streams were identified as critical strategies for sustaining long-term impact. Additionally, the Board underscored Tri-C's strengths in affordability, corporate connections, and its strong community presence, positioning it as a leader in student success and workforce development.

Essential skills for today's job market—including adaptability, communication, critical thinking, and financial literacy—were highlighted as priorities for curriculum and student support initiatives. The Board also emphasized the need to cultivate institutional values such as empathy, resilience, integrity, and innovation to foster a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Looking ahead, the Board recommended strategies that prioritize access, collaboration, and financial sustainability. Expanding industry partnerships, increasing endowment growth, and exploring strategic acquisitions were identified as key opportunities to ensure Tri-C not only meets future challenges but thrives as a leading force in higher education and economic mobility.

Below are the summaries for each of the individual reflection questions.

Question 1

Reflecting on our Vision: Consider the context and vision casting message you just heard, what resonated with you the most? What challenges do you see?

Summary

Immediate action is needed to address declining enrollment and the changing needs of students in Northeast Ohio.

The Foundation Board emphasized the importance of community impact, strategic planning, and innovation, the focus is on collaboration with businesses, community partnerships, and understanding generational needs. Affordability, accessibility, and removing barriers like food and housing insecurities are critical.

The introduction of applied bachelor's degrees at lower costs and the need for multiple revenue streams are highlighted.

The role of the Foundation is crucial in enabling access and focus. Ultimately, the goal is to provide transformative education, economic opportunities, and a sense of belonging while maintaining the mission.

Question 2

Reflecting on our Mission: What unique strengths or characteristics does Tri-C have that differentiate it from other local educational options that give our students a competitive advantage in getting a good paying job or getting their BA?

Summary

Tri-C offers affordable tuition and accessible education through multiple campuses and strong community partnerships. The institution is committed to affordability, providing wrap-around services, and having strong corporate connections to ensure job readiness. Tri-C offers a variety of programs, including credentials, associate, and bachelor's degrees, with an emphasis on lifelong learning and innovative approaches.

The college maintains a strong presence in the community, supports students financially through scholarships, and focuses on student success and outcomes.

Tri-C's experienced faculty, leadership, and comprehensive support services contribute to its positive reputation and adaptability to meet the needs of non-traditional students.

Question 3

Reflecting on our Mission: What skills, knowledge or competencies do you think are most critical for students entering today's job market, either immediately after leaving Tri-C or after further education?

Summary

The Foundation Board identified several key skills and traits for success include adaptability, flexibility, resilience, self-awareness, effective communication (both verbal and written), problem-solving, critical thinking, work ethic, financial literacy, collaboration, time management, social and networking skills, leadership, a positive attitude, and a continuous learning mindset.

These encompass both soft and technical skills, emphasizing the importance of being able to adapt to changes, handle feedback, work within a team, and navigate the modern workplace effectively.

Question 4

Reflecting on our Values: What institutional values might we need to nurture or develop further to meet the challenges ahead?

Summary

The Tri-C Foundation Board identified several key institutional values that should be nurtured or further developed to meet future challenges. Their responses emphasize the importance of empathy, compassion, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for students.

Additionally, they highlighted the need to strengthen educational excellence, student experience, faculty development, and continuous improvement to drive innovation and quality. Core values such as integrity, accountability, ethics, respect, humility, and trust were also noted as essential for maintaining a strong institutional culture.

To enhance community engagement and accessibility, the Board emphasized affordability, inclusivity, sustainability, and partnership building as priorities. Finally, they underscored the importance of technology, critical thinking, self-reliance, and risk-taking in preparing students for the evolving workforce.

Overall, the focus remains on creating a dynamic and forward-thinking institution that prioritizes student success, faculty growth, and strong community connections.

Strategies to Thrive

What strategies should Tri-C consider to do more than meet the challenges ahead, but thrive?

Summary

To not only meet future challenges but thrive, the Tri-C Foundation Board recommends a strategic focus on access, flexibility, and collaboration in higher education. Strengthening communication and community engagement while maintaining fiscal responsibility will be key to sustaining long-term success.

The Board emphasizes the importance of building strong partnerships with other institutions and industries to expand student opportunities and career pathways. Additionally, Tri-C should prioritize high-impact initiatives, work to increase endowment

growth, and explore strategic acquisitions of struggling colleges to broaden its reach and influence.

By fostering innovation, resource sustainability, and community alignment, Tri-C can position itself as a leader in higher education and workforce development.