

Strategic Planning results from the Metro North Chamber.

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Our process was a 2 step data collection process.

1. 10 question electronic survey sent out to all Metro North Chamber members
2. Meeting with Metro North Chamber Board of Directors to discuss survey results and add additional ideas as needed.

Below is the data we collected from the Metro North Chamber board on our 10 questions

1. What 5 words do you hear in the business community that describes us?
 - Not fair---too much waste.
 - ok
 - Inexpensive; Relevant; Cooperative; Forward-Thinking; Flexible.
 - Frankly, I can't say I have a good gauge of the business community's perception of ARCC. However, the manufacturing community certainly seems to see value in the technical college. I say that judged on my perception of their involvement with the college.
 - I haven't heard any discussion about your educational institutions in the business community.
2. How does your actual experiences with us compare with what you expected?
 - I took classes years ago. Wanted to reenter & was told I had to Pay\$\$\$\$\$\$\$. NOT HELPFUL!
 - It was good to have a college to pick up generals
 - The goals are lofty; but the connections with the business community need to be strengthened and used more frequently.
 - I received my Associate's degree from ARCC and generally had a very good experience there. I was satisfied with the professors and think they generally met or exceeded my expectations when I attended. I just don't have enough experience with the technical college to render an opinion.
 - At this time I have had no experience with your institutions or your students.
3. How can the colleges better integrate with the business community?
 - Work with students as individual, no as a mass. The tech needs to stick with specialty training and not repeat academic classes just learned in high school.
 - Let the student know where there are actual jobs available
 - Every program at the colleges should have an advisory committee which meets several times per year with faculty to enhance progress, relevance and strategies for success.
 - They need to be talking with them constantly. I not familiar with how the colleges decide on which courses to offer and so forth. However, I read article after article about how businesses cannot find the skills they need. The folks who decide the course offerings absolutely need to be constantly talking to business owners directly. Take them out for lunch. Organize some roundtable events. The dialogue needs to be ongoing because of how fast our globalized world changes.
 - Talk to businesses about what type of training/education they want new employees to have.

4. What is one thing we can change to achieve excellence?
 - Be respectful to students. (listen and think outside the box)
 - Let the high schools know that getting generals done here saves thousands!
 - Annually publish fact-driven results which show the achievement of the subset of statements of the Strategic Plan.
 - I would refer to my response on #3. I would also highly encourage professors/instructors to bring business people in to their classrooms. Give them a chance to talk with the students directly. The real world is so much different than the classroom. I think it helps to hear this message from someone outside of the educational institution.
 - Better communication with community.

5. What would you like to see changed at the colleges to better meet your needs?
 - Tech--involve the business community. I would like to hire students that are ready to work. Community college--don't be a repeat of high school.
 - Develop a serious outreach effort to bring more students into your engineering and manufacturing programs to enhance the drive underway in Minnesota to restore its manufacturing business base, which has taken a major "hit" in recent years.

6. What about our histories helps/hinders us?
 - Instructors that are under educated. It is not fair to take money from students to be misled by 'teachers'. This is so unfair.
 - none
 - The sheer doubling of student tuition in the last decade does not bode well for attracting highly capable students from families of lesser means.

7. What could the colleges do to position us better to meet the needs of the future?
 - Send students out to shadow professionals to see if the college is on track. Maybe instructors should be out in the field or be advised by skilled professionals.
 - inform students of industries that are in need of more employees
 - Establish a "tuition-forgiveness" program to return monies to students who successfully engage in programs which lead to building Minnesota's manufacturing base.
 - See answer to number 3. Also PICK UP TOM FRIEDMAN's BOOK, "That Used To Be Us." The whole book is a good read but you only need to read a few chapters. Read about the challenges that globalization and technology pose. And read the chapter that is entirely dedicated to ideas about reforming our education system.
 - Really evaluate curriculum, student experiences and how it relates to actual job duties.

8. What value to you place on liberal arts/technical education?
 - Technical education needs top priority attention. You are going to be skipped over by on-the-job training made popular in the 'good old days'.
 - I think that vocational schools are way better than state colleges. State colleges are a huge waste of money.
 - They are both important, in different ways. We need employees who are conversant in literature and the arts. That makes them both more interesting people and far more capable of working with others in a team effort. But their technical education is what will drive serious production in the creative aspects of their jobs.
 - Both have their place in this world. The challenge of a liberal arts education is what does it really train you to do? History is very important as is learning to read and write. However, people also need to learn specific skills.
 - Very high!

9. What more could the colleges do to better prepare our students for the next steps?

- Invite business leaders in to visit and lecture some classes. Stay abreast of job changes and technical updates.
- job placement
- A constant, consistent effort at providing both tutoring and counseling to mentor to the needs of students to help them feel they are making serious and definite progress every semester as they work toward program completion.
- Internships is huge. Again, give students to opportunity to talk and network with business owners/employers.
- Having not personally worked with a student from your college I can't say for certain. But, speaking in generalities about post-secondary education it seems that students often don't have any idea what it would be like at an actual job, so any courses, internships, externships, etc... Which make that adjustment to an actual career easier would be great.

10. What priorities should we consider as we go through our strategic planning process?

- Be aware of change in the workplace. Flexibility. Keeping tuition fair. Require teachers to have at least 4 year teaching degrees + specialty training requirements updated often.
- Marketing and getting the word out how tech schools can save thousands of dollars
- GO PUBLIC! You have nothing to be ashamed of in connecting so strongly with the community that anyone and everyone feels a part of helping build a better and more relevant Community College.
- Communicate with business and potential employers (which you are doing through this survey), and make sure your students can meet their needs.