Prairie State College

Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Strategic Planning Update

Development of PSC's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan has progressed on schedule. A comprehensive, transparent, participatory planning process has provided broad input from internal and external stakeholders, and the College is on target to have a new plan in place by Fall 2013.

Strategic planning, at its core, is a tool that can help PSC achieve its mission. It provides a framework for 1) developing a clear picture of the College's present condition, 2) envisioning where the college needs to be in the future, and 3) identifying the priorities it should focus upon to get where it needs to go. These priorities become the basis for the strategic plan; the plan outlines goals that drive decision-making, action plans, and the allocation of resources.

Information and data were collected through multiple avenues to inform the planning process. Results of the Fall 2012 Entering Student Survey provided the student perspective. Through additional surveys, the College reached out to its program and citizen advisory board members, foundation directors, and local businesses and industry for input. A half-day faculty workshop and follow-up survey identified relevant strategic issues. Administrators and managers provided input by completing a readiness assessment survey. All employees were invited to provide feedback on the College's values, strengths, and weaknesses. The top strengths and weaknesses, as identified by the survey results, are presented in this Brief. The average rating for each item is based on a seven-point scale.

The Strategic Planning Team, a diverse group of thirty individuals representing all divisions and all employee groups, participated in four half-day workshops. These workshops were designed to provide participants with an informed foundation and engage them in thoughtful discussions. Workshop topics included:
- Mission and values
- Stakeholder input (survey results, etc.)
- External mandates and policies (from the HLC, ACCT, etc.)
- Competitors and partnerships
- Initiatives, priorities and challenges of each PSC division
- External opportunities and challenges beyond our control
- Internal performance indicators and strengths/weaknesses
- Future vision of PSC

At the final workshop, the Team identified important priorities for PSC's 2013 -2016 Strategic Plan. This comprehensive list focuses on big picture issues, and is intended to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant (to our mission) and Timed (complete or attain milestones within three years).

The Planning and Quality Improvement (PQI) Committee will take the list of priorities and translate it into overall themes and goals/objectives for the strategic plan. During the next few months, the PQI will also identify key metrics and coordinate the development of action/operational plans that outline new strategies for achieving the objectives. The PQI will also play a role in tying the plan to the budget and monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan over the three-year cycle, ensuring that continuous improvement and progress toward plan goals is achieved. As work moves forward, the PQI Committee will share information with the college community to keep everyone up-to-date.

Employee Survey Results

Top Ten PSC Strengths	Average Rating
Strong health programs (nursing, dental hygiene)	6.53
Affordability of quality education (more bang for the buck)	5.96
Open access to all students	5.94
PSC Foundation and support of students	5.91
Small class sizes	5.84
Student-centered programs and personalized assistance/services/resources (writing center, STEM, TRIO, intentional advising, assigned FA advisors)	5.83
Commitment to quality education	5.76
Overall, faculty, staff, admin. and managers care about students	5.73
Overall, faculty, staff, admin. and managers are committed to students	5.71
Overall, faculty, staff, admin. and managers are qualified	5.70

Top 15 PSC Weaknesses	Average Rating
Lack of transparency in hiring process	5.98
Low graduation and completion rates	5.78
No dedicated grant writer	5.76
Lack of transparency with regard to allocation of funds	5.74
Allocation of funds not aligned with priorities	5.67
Heavy reliance on grant funding for various student resources	5.64
Difficulty in extracting information and creating reports in Datatel	5.64
Incompatibility of some processes/procedures with Datatel	5.62
Some employees are resistant to change	5.59
High turnover in administration	5.55
No platform to regularly share what's going on between divisions/departments	5.53
Increasing reliance on adjuncts rather than full-time faculty	5.52
Space limitations - classrooms, meeting rooms, offices	5.49
Insufficient interdepartmental communications	5.47
Instability of technology/on-line infrastructure	5.46