Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

For

Brentwood Community College

---A Case Study---

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brentwood Community College (BCC) is a two year community college situated in a small rural region with a service area of two counties in Western North Carolina. The local community has historically been dependent on textile manufacturing, which has seen a 75% reduction in jobs over the past five years. Subsequently, the local area's unemployment rates are higher than national averages and many residents' incomes fall at or below the poverty line.

The college's current state includes 2,000+ student enrollment that has been steadily declining over the past year or so. While textile layoffs appeared to be supporting enrollment at the college, even these are now slowing down leaving the college to struggle with a shallow but steady slope of FTE decline. Based on the past five years, the college's enrollment profile has included a predominantly white (82%) student base with a ratio of 2:1 women to men. 53% of enrollees are 25 years of age or older and 85.2% reside in the county of Delmar in which the college is geographically located. Given the historical predominance of textile manufacturing plants in the area, many local residents believe or have been raised to believe that a "job is better than an education", resulting in many first-generation students at the college who often lack the home-support necessary to be successful in higher education.

Given some of the current enrollment issues, the college could benefit by conducting some self-reflective research, particularly in relation to its public image among local, educated families. One of the best methods for managing its strengths and weaknesses, and addressing its opportunities and challenges would be an in-depth environmental scan of both internal and external factors. This can could help to the college's ideal market segments and provide a foundation for creating an effective program mix given the community's high unemployment rates.

However, for purposes of this paper, the SWOC analysis has been conducted by the Director of Enrollment in order to identify the college's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. As well, based on interviews with the President and Dean of Student Affairs, a set of institutional enrollment priorities has been created to drive the development of the key issues that have become the foundation of this SEM plan and its subsequent strategies and activities.

Some of the institution's main strengths include a new senior administration; an institutional-wide commitment to learning by faculty and staff; a strong and well-respected internal committee structure called TALC; a recent $11m gift for scholarships; and relatively low tuition rates (in-state and out-of-state). Weaknesses include historical tension between student affairs and instructional divisions (common for post-secondary institutions); a lack of reflective practices related to enrollment specifically; no recent formal market research; and no systematic method of evaluating, adding, or removing programs. Its key

opportunities include a projected increase in the number of high school seniors graduating over the next five years; online education possibilities; its capacity to build college-commitment with local grade 9 through 12 high school students through the college's dual enrollment and HUSKINS programs. Some of its key challenges include reduced state funding per year; online education competition for BCC students; perception problems by many of the two year community college system as a viable educational alternative; and a downturn in the local economy based on massive textile layoffs over the past five years.

Based on the SWOC analysis presented in this paper in combination with the identified institutional enrollment priorities, the following nine key results are being suggested as a basis for a college SEM plan:

1. Enhance college image through effective marketing efforts
2. Increase/enhance recruitment efforts to reach target markets
3. Improve working relationships with local high school
4. Establish program mix to meet local employment needs
5. Students will experience the admissions process as quick and user-friendly
6. Increase percentage of students receiving some form of financial aid by 2% for Fall 2009
7. The public will experience the college as friendly and helpful
8. Increase the percentage of students retained from Fall to Fall by 2% for 2010
9. Establish advising as a cornerstone to student success

Along with these nine key results, this paper will define specific strategies to reach each key result, a list of detailed tasks/activities against a timeline for completing these strategies, as well as an evaluation plan that considers both formative and summative methods of determining progress and success, respectively.

BCC has a unique "open-door" mission that, all by itself, creates many challenges in enrolling and retaining students. Ignoring its own "tall-order" mission and putting its head in the sand in relation to all of the external challenges and demographic changes swirling around the institution would be akin to political and social suicide. And, like so many community colleges, BCC faces many barriers in both the process of identifying and then addressing institutional priorities.

However, the institution does have the ability to begin taking baby steps towards more strategic enrollment-related priorities. And the timing for this could not be better as the potential for missed opportunities and pending threats in the external world have growing power to jeopardize BCC's current market position. But it is never too late…so long as the institution is functioning, enrolling, teaching, and graduating, there is the opportunity to also re-strategize, change direction, branch out, and renew its mission in the light of a new millennium.

INTRODUCTION

Brentwood Community College (BCC) is a two year institution situated in a small rural region with a service area of two counties in western North Carolina. BCC has been in existence since the late 1960s and has grown steadily in enrollment, facilities, and employee-base since then. The college is a member of the North Carolina community college system and operates under an "open-door" policy. This "open-door" policy applies to all North Carolina community colleges and means that "Brentwood Community College shall be open to all eligible individuals who can benefit regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnic origin, race, religion or disabilities. The essence of the College's efforts shall be to contribute, in cooperation with other local educational systems and institutions, to a higher quality of life in the community it serves" (BCC, 2007).

As part of its "open door" policy, BCC offers individual courses and certificate, diploma and degree programs within three main areas: transfer programs, designed to allow students to transfer to four year institutions; applied science programs that include "hands-on" vocational and technical career options such as early childhood education, welding, cosmetology, criminal justice, engineering, broadcast, etc; and business science programs such as business administration, computer networking, office systems technology, customer service, etc. The goal for all students is to "acquire skills for new or continued employment, as well as to function effectively as citizens in our society" (BCC, 2007). As well, BCC offers continuing education, non-credit courses and training for local business and industry, as well a for community and personal enrichment.

Mission

While Brentwood Community College operates under a state-wide mandate for the North Carolina community college system, it also has its own local mission captured in the phrase "to improve life through learning". The college's value statement is "to transform Brentwood Community College into a preeminent center recognized nationally for excellence in learning and services" (BCC, 2007) and is supported by the following values:

- A commitment to excellence
- Nurturing an organizational climate of integrity, care and respect for individuals
- Innovation, evaluation and informed change
- Elimination of barriers to learning
- Self-directed learning and critical thinking
- The preservation and perpetuation of our diverse cultural heritage
- Serving as a catalyst for positive community growth

Stakeholders

While BCC has conducted some information in the past regarding stakeholder (internal and external) opinions of the college, given some of the external challenges it currently faces, it could definitely benefit by conducting a formal and comprehensive stakeholder analysis. While there is clearly a shared sense of purpose by employees about the value of the work they do, there are few BCC documents that formally identify the college's most important stakeholders. However, based on the institution's mission, vision, and values, the following list of stakeholders can be surmised in order of priority in Table I. This set of priorities was created by first identifying that the community, rather than any particular individual employer or student, is the college's first priority. The college exists to support and enhance the health of the community in which it is set, and in doing so supports employers and students. Employers support the community by providing gainful employment to its citizens, and a service/industry that contributes to the welfare of society. Students, as citizens, are obliged to participate in societal and community health by becoming skilled, integral workers or by supporting those who go out every day to their jobs. Faculty and staff are hired to support students' in their quest to become effective citizen; administration are meant to support faculty and staff in this role; and the Board of Trustees must support administration's efforts to positively impact all other stakeholders. Putting a stakeholder into slot # 6, for example, is not meant to diminish its significance to this hierarchy, but rather to acknowledge that when questions of purpose or priority are raised at the college, the impact to each stakeholder must be weighed in their order of this importance to the mission of the college.

Table I

Stakeholder	Priority
Community (general public)	1
Local Employers/Business Industry	2
Students	3
Faculty/Staff	4
Administration	5
Board of Trustees	6

Relationship of State-Mandate to Enrollment

As an "open-door" institution, BCC has a clear obligation to create recruitment, admission, and retention

practices that reduce as many barriers as possible for any student qualified and interested to attend, and

who has the ability to benefit by enrolling in classes. This "open-door" obligation could be considered an

"easy enrollment order" in one sense, since the screening of applicants is minimal, making it possible for

the admissions office to simplify and generalize the steps required for admission to the college. However,

in another sense this same obligation creates a "tall enrollment order" whereby the admissions office can

assume nothing about the academic ability, motivation, and hook-ability of its target audience since

everyone is potentially a target audience. The institution has no freedom to deny admission (except in

very specific and limited situations), and no ability to create a selective admission process except for

acceptance into professional health programs. While some consider this "open-door" approach a noble

and necessary service for those who might otherwise never attend college, others might look at this

enrollment mandate as a watering down of services and a curriculum that is designed only for the most

academically challenged of the community.

Relationship of BCC's Local Mission to Enrollment

The mission "to improve life through learning" is a likely purpose for an institution of higher education. In

relation to enrollment specifically, this mission offers advantages and challenges to the enrollment office.

The advantage of this mission is that with low barriers to admission, it is likely that most students who

attend class are in a position to have their life improved, and to experience learning at some point during

their time at the college. As well, the college's determination to become a preeminent center of learning

has resulted in a set of student competencies shared across all curriculums as well as a general

movement among all faculty towards interactive, cooperative, and active learning in the classroom. The college's ability to make good on its mission in the classroom gives the enrollment office something powerful to pitch when recruiting students. The challenge inherent in this mission has to do with the enrollment's office ability to retain students. Students cannot "improve" or "learn" if they dropout, and given the broad spectrum of academic ability the college accepts, retention can be difficult.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

The Community

While BCC serves both Finney and Delmar counties it is physically located in Delmar County which therefore has the most significant impact on the college, its enrollment, and the profile of students served. Delmar County has been built and sustained over the years mostly by employment related to health and education (24%), transportation and utilities (21%), and manufacturing (18%). Over the past six years the manufacturing industry (specifically textiles) has taken a nosedive with 70% of the jobs being eliminated due to the industry moving to China (Fedstats, 2007). Needless to say, these changes have had a devastating impact on the local townspeople as well as the economy around them.

Historical Enrollment Trends

Brentwood Community College does not have a formal enrollment plan. While there is an important reference to enrollment goals in the Strategic Plan Update (2006), these references do not actively drive enrollment decisions at the college (Quinley, 2007). As per Table II below, fall enrollment trends for the past five years have consistently hovered around the 2,000 headcount mark.

Table II – Enrollment Headcount for Fall terms 2003 to 2007

Fall Term	Enrollment by Headcount
2003	2093
2004	2190
2005	2220
2006	2110
2007	2124

As depicted in Table III, the college serves a predominantly white, female population of students between the ages of 18 to 39, with the majority of these residing in Delmar County, in which the college is physically located. As a mill-town, the community is replete with people who have barely finished high school, never mind attended college. Consequently, as local textile manufacturing plants have closed over the past five years, 75% of mill workers have lost their jobs, forcing them back to college. Laid off workers are predominantly white, female first-generation college students, between the ages of 25 to 64. These layoffs have impacted BCC's enrollment profile particularly in the age range and gender categories.

Table II – Demographic Enrollment Profile from 2002 to 2006

	Enrollees (2002 to 2006) N = 10,000 (approx.)
Ethnicity	
White	82%
Black	15%
Hispanic	1.4%
Other	1.0%
Asian	0.3%
American-Indian	0.3%
Gender	
Female	64%
Male	36%
Age Range	
17 or younger	8.7%
18 to 24	37.7%
25 to 39	31%
40 to 64	22%
65+	0.6%
County	
Delmar	85.2%
Finney	7.26%
Other	6.51%
Out of State	0.43%

The community is at a crossroads, currently experiencing a lethal combination of high unemployment with a bleak "job-prospect" picture in the local county. As well, the historical blue-collar attitude that 'a job is better than an education', combined with an increase in poverty and domestic abuse, and paired with significant cuts to social services, all serve to make it very tough for students (particularly women) to

break out of these cycles and attend college while also lacking family support for their educational aspirations.

SWOC Process for BCC

According to Noel-Levitz (2007) 40.2% of two-year colleges report having some sort of written plan to guide efforts. As well, National On-Campus Report (2005) discusses how there is a lack of data in the two year community college system in general…" (p.4). In reality, BCC has successfully responded to local economic downturns, strategized quickly to address decreasing enrollment trends, and cooperated with state-wide initiatives promoting such things as minority student enrollment and admission of undocumented immigrants. Many of these efforts, however, have been reactive and occurring in the absence of an overarching strategic enrollment plan. The college's past enrollment patterns in combination with the technological, political, economic and social forces swirling around it has brought it to an "enrollment management" crossroads. The timing is right for a SWOC analysis (or evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and challenges) to be conducted as it relates to the college's future in enrollment as part of ensuring the college has the capacity to survive itself and weather the world outside of its walls into the future.

While a SWOC analysis has been provided in the "SWOC Analysis by the Director of Enrollment" section below, ideally the college needs to undertake its own SWOC process. This would allow for a confirmation or re-evaluation of the SWOC analysis below, would help to build participation on these matters across campus, and would facilitate employees' heightened awareness to critical internal and external issues. Such a process should include data gathering, creating a group to spearhead the process, determining where and how the group should meet, guidelines for the group's process as well as how feedback will be solicited from across the campus, and a plan for what will happen with the information that is analyzed and synthesized. These steps are described below.

1) Data Gathering

One of the first steps towards conducting an effective SWOC process at BCC is that of data collection

(Bryson, 2004). This step would include the collection and synthesis of the following information:

- Enrollment trends over the past five years
- An enrollment profile of the student body for the past five years
- Review of local community economic and demographic profile and projections
- Review of the State Office's key political and social issues over the past three years
- A review of previous budgets

2) Creating the Group

Bryson (2004) speaks of the importance of understanding "tension fields" (p.129) in an organization.

These fields refer to the organization's ability to manage "capacities and intentions in relation to the

opportunities and challenges it faces." (p.129). This dynamic tension exists at BCC and has a direct

impact on enrollment management. For this reason, the group created to conduct this SWOC analysis

needs to include stakeholders from key divisions across campus who represent a constituency and who

have the power and/or influence organizationally to make things happen. This group would therefore

include divisional deans, the president and vice president, and all college directors. The director of

enrollment needs to act as the facilitator to ensure that the groups' process is dynamic and constructive.

Sub-groups may be created to collect feedback from other key stakeholders including front-line staff,

students, and community members. The information collected from these groups would be fed back to the

main group for synthesis.

3) Where and How to Meet

The main group will meet in a quiet, separate facility on campus where they can focus and not be

distracted by matters related to their title or office. While a retreat would be ideal, in an effort to "keep it

real" this is very unlikely to happen at this point, in part because of the institution's inability to see the

value of strategic enrollment management in the first place. Sub-groups will meet in the same location.

Food will be provided for all groups.

4) Guidelines

• The facilitator will play a key role in leading the group through an initial exercise to determine their process for making sharing "safe, for resolving disagreements, for disabling deadlocks, and for reaching a shared vision of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

• Once there is an agreement about "how" to work through the material, the group will be asked to accept the role of the facilitator in keeping the group on-track and in-line.

• A mini-workshop will be conducted at the beginning to assist the group in understanding how to get the most out of brainstorming exercises. Basically, the group will be reminded that agreement on every point while brainstorming is not required and editing/criticism of others' ideas is not acceptable at this point in the process. This helps to create a safe environment for opening up.

5) The Process

The main group needs to undergo two different processes. The first is the "organizational highs, lows, and themes" exercise (Bryson, 2004, p.138) and will be used specifically to identify the organization's strengths and weaknesses. The purpose for using this exercise is that the college's history needs to be reviewed and discussed to actively identify strengths and successes, but also the weaknesses that can sometimes go unseen by virtue of their longevity. The second process the group will undergo will be the "snow card technique" to identify opportunities and threats (or challenges). This process allows the group to free-flow through ideas, generating as many external issues as possible before paring down the list. Sub-groups will undergo the "snow card technique" for strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (challenges). This technique is highly interactive, fun, and allows for maximum brainstorming by other stakeholder groups. As well, the sub-group's decision about how to prioritize their responses will also communicate as much to the main group as the results themselves.

6) What's Next?

As noted by Bryson (2004), information generated and collected needs to be "discussed, analyzed, compared and contrasted." (p.143). For this reason, it will be important for the main group to schedule 3

to 4 meetings to both conduct their own SWOT analysis, digest the feedback from the sub-groups, and then create a final list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats along with a rationale for their choices. As noted in Bryson (2004), the group could benefit from creating an A list and B list under each of the four categories. This approach allows the group to include more rather than less of the content, but also reflects priorities as determined through the comparing and contrasting process.

The group's final report will be widely distributed across campus and an email system will be created to solicit anonymous feedback.

A discussion room will also be created for the main group to allow them to discuss the process, the results, and any new thoughts on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats throughout the year. The group will meet yearly to review their original document, participate in another group exercise, and make changes where necessary.

SWOC Analysis by Director of Enrollment

In the absence of a SWOC analysis by the institution, the Director of Enrollment has conducted one. As well, because of a historical lack of systematic reflection exercises on the part of the institution, in combination with internal data not harvested in an "apples to apples" manner, much of the content of the SWOC below is based on the following:

- Review of college history as presented on the website
- Review of assessment efforts in student affairs
- Enrollment trends collected over the past five years
- Review of economic trends in the local community
- Feedback from the president
- Personal observations by the Enrollment Director as a four year employee

The following sections reflect a description of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and challenges.

Internal - Strengths

Strength # 1 – In the past four months there has been a turnover of top administration (president and vice president). The new president is a long-term employee of the institution and was for many years and then the vice-president for two years. During her time as dean she was instrumental in helping the college, through participatory methods, set a course for excellence in learning. The president is truly dedicated to "learning" in all of its forms and truly views all initiatives through the lens of how they will assist with this objective. The new vice-president was hired externally and has the confidence of faculty and administration who both played a key role in her hiring. As well, she comes with a fresh approach to generating FTE for the institution in a way that serves the community and capitalizes on the institutional mission to make the college more accessible.

Strength # 2 – There is an institutional commitment to "learning" at BCC. This commitment has resulted in the college developing unified learning competencies for all students in all programs, along with the implementation of interactive and cooperative learning strategies in most classrooms. As well, learning is supported by professional development decisions for both faculty and staff, as well as through a campus-wide involvement in assessment of instructional activities and services across the entire college.

Strength # 3 – As a result of the college's journey over the past 10 years to become a "preeminent center recognized nationally for excellence in learning and services" (BCC, 2007) the college has developed a strong internal committee structure. Each committee is dedicated to enhancing learning at the college as it relates to a variety of issues such as campus life, systems and processes, leadership, learning, advising, etc. Committee membership includes representation from all areas of the college, with each committee managing a budget and holding the power to make decisions about how to best utilize that budget to fulfill its objectives. Unlike many institutional experiences of committees, there exists at BCC a campus-wide confidence in the power of these committees to effect change as it supports the college's overall mission. In essence, these committees have been "charged" and "empowered".

Strength # 4 - An $11m dollar gift to BCC through the will of a local county resident who passed away in 2005 was donated to the college on the condition that it is used only for students. The previous president turned the entire set of funds into an ongoing "no-need" scholarship program for students who do not qualify for financial aid grants based on their income levels. While approximately 50% of the student body currently receives financial aid, it is estimated that another 20% could potentially qualify if they applied. Of the 30% remaining, approximately 25% might potentially qualify for this no-need scholarship based on their financial status and county of residence. This means that almost 95% of BCC's student body could potentially qualify for some type of aid that does not have to be repaid, further reducing barriers to enrollment.

Strength # 5 - Tuition rates (both in-state and out-of-state) at BCC are relatively low. While tuition rates for community colleges across the USA are typically lower than at other types of institutions (Buam & Payea, 2004), North Carolina falls below even the national average by approximately 38%. This fact enhances BCC's accessibility for students that much more.

Strength # 6 – There is a significant commitment among faculty towards offering excellence in learning to their students. Each year faculty willingly participates in workshops, conferences, training, and retreats dedicated to the further development of contemporary teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

Strength # 7 – The majority of BCC's employees describe it as "a great place to work". Despite lower-than-national-average salary rates, the obvious support of senior administration and a college-wide determination to join together to become a learning center of excellence has created powerful bonds among the staff and faculty over time.

Internal - Weaknesses

Weakness # 1 – The history of division between the instructional and student services side of the house is not a unique feature for a community college, and it has certainly found at home at BCC. The college continues to struggle to find ways to integrate the important work of faculty with student services and the

registration events that involve both sides. As well, the college must observe state requirements for the number of days in-session and still be able to offer full-time faculty their deserved breaks during the course of the year. These restrictions, in combination with the need for a comprehensive advising training program offer barriers to enrollment planning making it difficult to know where to begin in establishing a "college-wide" participation in and accountability for enrollment objectives.

Weakness # 2 – With the implementation of DATATEL enrollment data has been difficult to collect given the data collection glitches of the new system in combination. Also, the lack of appropriate numbers of staffing in the enrollment office has made it difficult for the Director to spend time away from the busy admissions desk conducting research and evaluating enrollment patterns. For this reason, there are few historically reflective data or reports upon which to understand enrollment-related decisions of the past.

Weakness # 3 – There has not been any recent formal marketing research or planning conducted that might assist BCC in more accurately defining its market segments. Consequently, it has been difficult to coordinate public relations efforts with admission-related communications to speak as one voice to these markets.

Weakness # 4 – In the past only limited funds were made available for recruiting efforts. There was perhaps an over-reliance on word-of-mouth for the purpose of meeting recruiting objectives, with less resources dedicated to outsourcing for colorful printed materials or small gifts to hand out at recruiting events. Also, over time, state requirements have made it more difficult for college administrators to dedicate funds to the purchase of recruiting paraphernalia, even when there was an interest to do so.

Weakness # 5 – BCC's program mix has had its own successes over the years, with curriculum opportunities that parallel those offered at many community colleges around the state. And while BCC also houses some very unique programs, such as Broadcast or Advertising and Graphic Design, it is unclear what criteria is used in evaluating the effectiveness of all programs, and whether low enrollment is

reflective of outdated curriculum, or the need for more aggressive marketing. This is an important question when attempting to serve a community wracked by layoffs and a mass exodus of an entire industry of textiles mills from the area. The downturn in the local economy in combination with a lack of jobs in the immediate area bring into question whether programs are training students for jobs tjat don't exist locally or require them to relocate.

Weakness # 6 – Like most colleges with satellite campuses, BCC's satellite campus (located in the college's "other" county of service) has been under-utilized as a method for supporting curriculum enrollment. This smaller campus offers enormous potential for the college to penetrate enrollment markets in its "other" county, if it could find a way to bridge its relationship with satellite staff and effectively grow the facility and its services.

Weakness # 7 – With DATATEL now firmly in place, the college now has the resources to identify a clear, demographic profile of its students in order to begin thinking about the different types of needs that are presented by different types of groups. For example, given the county's economic foundation as a mill-town, the number of first generation students far outnumber second and third generation college students in the local community. As part of managing this reality, it will be critical for the college to better understand the needs and fears of first generation students to ensure that its entry and on-campus services are delivered in a user-friendly way to this unique group. In addition, the college enrolls twice as many women as men. Ignoring the unique needs of first-generation, 26+ year old women could have disastrous effects on retention rates for these students who juggle jobs, children, and sometimes unsupportive families.

External - Opportunities

Opportunity # 1 - According to an unspoken agreement among all 52 community colleges in the North Carolina college system, institutions actively attempt to "not" recruit students from neighboring counties out of their jurisdiction. This gentlemen's agreement reduces the stress many similar-type schools experience as bigger institutions swoop into their territory to solicit students away from the area. This is

not to say that the institution experiences no competition (as will be discussed in the "challenges" section below), but that at very minimum, community colleges within driving distance will not openly recruit in BCC's two counties of service. As well, there are allowances for actively recruiting for "unique programs" or programs that are not available in the competing county.

Opportunity # 2 – While decreasing enrollment could be considered a threat to the institution, in fact it might be better categorized as an opportunity. Black (2007) described in a conference workshop the fact that sometimes declining enrollment is the only way to get the institution to attend to this problem, and dedicate time, energy, and resources to its resolution. This may be the "silver bullet" needed to get that fish to see the water that allows it to survive.

Opportunity # 3 – According to locally projected demographics in the two counties served by BCC the next five years promises a steady increase in the number of high school graduates (Stoops, 2005). This offers an important opportunity for BCC to reap some enrollment rewards from these potentially larger senior classes.

Opportunity # 4 – Online education is an incredible opportunity for BCC to increase its enrollment without having to put funds into facility expansion. The market for online classes extends itself not only to currently enrolled, on-campus students, but to students from any distance, as well as high school students who prefer the flexibility of an online college course to be used towards their high school matriculation.

Opportunity # 5 – BCC currently enjoys three programs with local high schools established by the state office whereby grade nine through twelve students can enroll in college classes either on the high school grounds (HUSKINS), on the college campus (Dual/Concurrent Enrollment), or online (Learn and Earn Online). These programs have the potential to not only grow enrollment at the college, but to build bridges for high school students so that they are more likely to feel prepared and comfortable stepping into a full-time college program upon high school graduation.

Opportunity # 6 – Three years ago the college helped to establish a "high school on campus". These students not only come to campus each day, but increase the number of college courses they take each year to potentially graduate with a high school diploma and an associate's degree or diploma at the same time. While tuition is free for these students, the college still receives FTE for their enrollment. The more the college can help this program to create its home on campus and to assist its faculty in integrating these students into the classroom, the greater likelihood of building FTE's through the enrollment of these teenagers.

Opportunity # 7 – A local non-profit organization has been created in the past three years to enhance the use of and access to technology in the local county. One of the objectives of this organization is to assist in bringing high speed internet to the entire community. Whereas currently only 30% of the community has access to high speed, the organization aspires to increase this to 100% over the next five years. They also intend to do this at a rate cheaper than any current provide can offer to the local townspeople (Bailey, 2007). This possibility dovetails nicely with BCC's opportunity to capitalize on the online education market. With more families having access to high speed internet in their homes, the potential number of online students can skyrocket into the future.

Opportunity # 8 – A handful of universities in the surrounding regions offer BA completion programs on BCC's main campus. This situation acts as a great opportunity for the college to enroll students into its transfer programs in hopes of their ability to gain entrance to the university BA programs on campus. Part of making this happen would include establishing strong articulation agreements with the on-campus universities to possibly guarantee BCC students a spot in those BA-level programs.

Opportunity # 9 – While BCC is not a university, and never intends to be one, it can aspire to be a "nicher" (Kotler & Fox, 1995) whereby it can "fill one or more niches that are not well served by other educational institutions (that is, universities) (p.177). This opportunity involves creating recruitment and support systems to not only help local high school seniors get to where they want to go, but in helping

them to create a Plan B (attending the local community college) just in case life intervenes in their Plan A (attending university). This is a niche market for sure for BCC's transfer programs.

External - Challenges

Challenge # 1 – As mentioned in a recent interview with the president, the state continues each year to offer less and less support to community colleges by way of funding (Johnson, 2007). This puts more pressure on community colleges to increase FTEs, and to have to find more resources and techniques to increase its own methods of support.

Challenge # 2 –While online education is most certainly an opportunity (noted above), it may be a bigger threat. Even with the gentlemen's agreement between NC community colleges not to encroach on one another's turf, no college has the ability to prevent students in a free market from enrolling in online classes at a neighboring institution. As well, competition can no longer afford to be thought of as something that exists only with institutions in proximity to BCC's county. In the world of online education, the definition of competition is expanded to include any institution, in or out-of-state, or even out-of-country where students have access to the internet. This threat has the potential to result in BCC losing online students who might otherwise be served locally.

Challenge # 3 – As noted in opportunity # 9, BCC is not, nor does it aspire to be a "challenger " of universities by trying to out-do or out-lead them in serving university-bound students. However, given the resources available to universities to recruit out-of-territory, the reputation of certain state universities for certain programs, as well as the motivation of parents and guidance counselors to send many students off to university in year one, it would behoove BCC to find a way to capitalize on opportunity # 9 (becoming an expert "nicher") in order to attract more university-bound students to attend the college.

Challenge # 4 – There exists in many communities and high schools the perception that a community college is only for academically challenged students. While BCC (or any community college) can never completely eradicate this public image, they can certainly do more to actively promote the work they do,

the successes of their students, and the value for students and alumnus in identifying themselves as BCC-ers. While this negative image of community colleges may be endemic to society, turning a blind eye to the ways the college can promote its students' hard-earned successes would be a calculated error.

Challenge # 5 – For reasons related to enhanced tourism dollars, the Western Carolina tourism industry has successfully put pressure on the government to change the fall high school semester to begin in late-August, end mid-January, and the winter term to begin late January and end mid-June.   This change has made it much more difficult for high school students to take dual enrollment classes on campus since their fall term doesn't end until mid-January, and college courses begin at the beginning of January. This situation has already negatively impacted enrollment of dual enrollment students and needs to be addressed to find ways, at least in the interim, to offer more flexible college course times to local high school students (possibly through increased online courses, or mini-semesters that occur for only two months of the entire term). Regardless of the interim strategies, it would also be prudent for BCC and other post-secondary institutions in the State of NC to lobby their government to have the high school schedule returned to its original format of a fall term from August through December and a winter term from January to April.

Challenge # 6 – The downturn in the local economy is making it more difficult for community members to locate employment. This has resulted in county unemployment rates rising higher than national averages. The lack of jobs in the local county high lights the importance of BCC reflecting on its program mix to ensure that it can train students for local jobs. As well, BCC has an opportunity to help lead the community towards a better economy through creative program offerings, rather than waiting for the economy to turn around before deciding what new programs to offer.

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Generating "Issues"

Based on interviews with the president of the college and the dean of student affairs, and in combination with the institution's mission documents, enrollment trends, local community profile information, and the

enrollment manager's SWOC analysis above, the following issues have been identified as issues for the institution.

- Student services understaffed
- College employees do not understand their role in enrollment
- Relationship with the county high schools
- Declining enrollment trends
- Programs profile
- Image/myths of community colleges
- Facilities/space
- Many first generation students in the community
- Silo mentality between different departments
- Relationship between main and satellite campus
- Less funding from the state
- Need for more partnerships
- Untapped potential in dual enrollment/Huskins classes for current high school students
- Online education opportunities and threats
- Culture of institution not as results-oriented as it needs to be
- Retention issues
- Recruiting students in middle school rather than high school
- Faculty advising
- Nature of the community
- Marketing and advertising

Creating Categories from Issues

The points above have been synthesized to reflect nine categories overall. These categories have been phrased a questions to clearly depict the nature of the issue.

1. How does BCC want to tackle the problem of declining enrollment, and what part does retention play in this equation?

2. How will BCC address the "silo" mentality that exists between different divisions, particularly in relation to the issue of enrollment management as a college-wide issue?

3. How will BCC strategically address marketing, public image, and advertising issues in such a way as to maximize its recruitment potential?

4. How will BCC ensure an on-campus program mix that is desired by the local community and can deliver on employment for its graduates?

5. What type of relationships does BCC want to have with the local high schools and how will it accomplish this?

6. Does BCC want to grow its online programs?

7. How will BCC address the college's growing need for more staff in student services?

8. How will BCC address its aging facilities and the need for more classroom and office space across the entire campus?

9. What types of external partnerships will BCC establish to offset reducing state funding?

Creating Institutional Enrollment Priorities

Enrollment priorities were developed based on the nine categories created above by considering how each one impacts enrollment at the college. The priorities below will become the basis for a strategy enrollment map for the institution as a whole.

- Outreach/recruitment (led by EM office, incorporate faculty)
- Public image/community college myths (led my marketing dept, but EM needs to play a part)
- Access issues (fin aid and admissions processes) (led by admissions/FA depts)
- Program mix (must be instigated by senior team and include all depts)
- Retention (can be led by EM office but is a campus-wide initiative)
- College awareness of enrollment management as a priority and each divisions'/individual's part in relation to it (need support of senior adminstrators but can be led by EM office with all employees)
- Advising (must come from senior administration and involve instructional deans and EM office)
- Relationships with local high schools (can be led by EM office)
- Marketing (must be led by marketing dept but should include EM office)

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Overarching Goal

The college's mission to be open to anyone who can benefit from their services regardless of "age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnic origin, race, religion, or disabilities" is a powerful enrollment statement all by itself. The mission of this community college, (like that of so many) is to enroll in order to serve. Enrollment then, while a lifeline to financial survival, is even more of a cornerstone to the college's r'aison d'etre. In essence, if funding were guaranteed regardless of enrollment, NOT enrolling

economically and academically disadvantaged students would equal the college NOT fulfilling its mission. Subsequently, only one enrollment goal has been created so as to mirror the institution's overall purpose. This goal will be discussed in relation to the three categories of community, access, and support, which three different lenses through which this one goal can be measured and pursued.
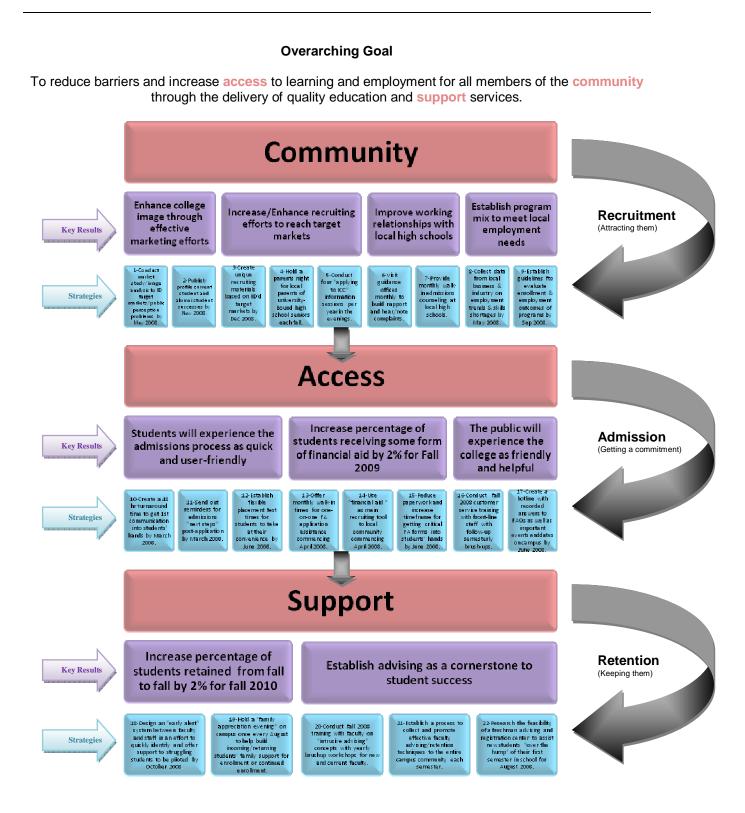
The Strategy Map

Based on interviews with the president of the college and the dean of student affairs, and in combination with the institution's mission documents, enrollment trends, local community profile information, business/industry focus group feedback and the enrollment manager's yearly reflective assessment narrative, a series of issues were identified, upon which critical categories were established, and enrollment priorities identified. In reviewing these priorities it became apparent that all or most of these issues could be connected to the mission, vision, and values of the institution through one overarching goal designed to emphasize the importance of "community", "access", and "support" to the college's purpose (see pink boxes in Figure 1).

The three models noted below in pink, mauve, and blue reflect the overall strategy map for the college's strategic enrollment management plan. The pink boxes are linked to the overarching goal "to reduce barriers and increase **access** to learning and employment for all members of the **community** through the delivery of quality education and **support** services". The mauve boxes reflect key results sought for each main area, and the blue boxes show more specific strategies that will be employed to pursue the key results. And, as denoted by the grey arrows on the right side, 'Community' can be equated with 'recruitment' or all the activities designed to increase public awareness of college services, promote the College's value, generate inquiries and encourage students to step into the application process (ie., "attracting them"). 'Access' is equated with 'admissions' or all the activities designed to strengthen applicants' momentum towards registering for classes (i.e., "getting a commitment"). And finally 'support' is equated with 'retention' or all the activities designed to help students sustain their enrollment over time. It is important to acknowledge that the smaller arrows that flow from community-to-access-to-support

reflect an intuitive flow of student activity from the external world through the entrance gates of the college and into the bosom of the campus and classroom.

FIGURE 1 – STRATEGY MAP FOR BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Overarching Goal

To reduce barriers and increase **access** to learning and employment for all members of the **community** through the delivery of quality education and **support** services.

Key Results and Strategies Rationale

The above strategy map reflects how the process of melding down the long list of issues into enrollment priorities has resulted in nine key results (mauve boxes) and their associated strategies. The ways in which these key results and strategies are a strong match for BCC are described below.

Key Result # 1 - Enhance college image through effective marketing efforts

The community college's image as a place for only academically challenge students has the power to turn off university-bound seniors as well as some academically challenged students (and their parents) who feel that enrolling in an auto-body or welding program at the college is like admitting they are not academically savvy. This in combination with a lack of strategic market planning and foresight has resulted in the college NOT being able to effectively combat negative perception, OR being able to proactively identify and communicate with its most important target groups. Subsequently, the strategies suggested include having the institution do some immediate damage control through advertising of current and former students' successes, while at the same time conducting an intensive study on the public's perception of the institution and its programs and services. This image information can provide a foundation for the development of future strategies for promoting a positive and purposively designed image of the institution.

Key Result # 2 - Increase/enhance recruitment efforts to reach target markets

Historically BCC has had limited financial or human resources for the recruitment of its students. While the college has relied successfully on word-of-mouth in the past, the present and future are being tarnished by declining enrollment, competition through online education, and renewed efforts by big-city universities to solicit local high school seniors away from the area. Initial strategies need to include beginning to reshape brochures to different types of audiences, holding an open-house/information session night for university-bound high school seniors' parents, and conducting "applying to BCC" evening information sessions. These are all very doable steps within the resources currently available to the admissions department. As well, a parents' night will help the institution to explore the untapped potential of working to recruit high school seniors who desire to eventually attend university.

Key Result # 3 - Improve working relationships with local high schools

Over the years the relationship with the local high schools and their guidance counselors has been cordial, but limited. As might be expected, important college information can be lost to students if counselors are not as informed as possible. And given the workload of high school counselors, there isn't the time for them to absorb and pass along all the details associated with college programs and admission steps. As well, it is important that the college not assume that counselors will push high school seniors towards BCC without offering to help the high schools with this important task. Consequently, the strategy of putting a college employee into the guidance office accomplishes three very important objectives: 1 - It shows the college's willingness to "come to the mountain" rather than waiting for the mountain to come to the college; 2 - It is a gesture of good faith and being physically present in the schools keeps the college planted firmly in the minds of high school staff and students as a post-secondary option; and 3 - Being available to listen and assist with counselors' complaints about the college can help to keep these complaints from creating a greater gap between the schools and the college, and offers an in-person method for the college to collect feedback on how it is being perceived by the high schools, their students, and parents.

Key Result # 4 - Establish program mix to meet local employment needs

 BCC has been operating on a fairly static program mix for quite a few years. While these programs have carried resulted in a consistent enrollment of 2000+ for the past seven to ten years, the new millennium brings with it significant mill-closures in the local community resulting in an economic and employment downturn. Manufacturing and clerical training programs continue while the job market falls in those areas. As well, popular programs such as cosmetology have seen enrollment and graduation rates that far exceed the number of salons and therefore employment opportunities in the local community. Recently, a "listening forum" conducted with local business and industry brought to the fore the need for more diverse health-care programs such as x-ray technologist and dental assistant and dental hygiene training. This forum feeds nicely into the suggested strategy of collecting information on local employment trends and employer needs. As well, the institution needs to address its program mix. A program profile that

has been 98% unchanged for thirty years is a calculated error in the new millennium and needs to be addressed first and foremost to truly understand the effectiveness of the college's current mix.

Key Result # 5 - Students will experience the admissions process as quick and user-friendly

Over the lifetime of the institution, the admissions department has seen unusually high turnover in both administrative and clerical staff. Subsequently, no systematic evaluation of admission systems such as communications with the public has ever been undertaken, and the long-held tradition of mailing letters to students has persisted over time. Given how time-consuming the process of mailing letters has been for one clerical staff person, students have not received more than one letter before they are enrolled. And that one letter can sometimes take 2 to 3 weeks to mail out depending on the volume of workload in the office. As well, new student placement testing (required for admission) is scheduled to coincide with registration periods, making it very difficult for students to complete their admissions process or become financial aid eligible before registration opens. Again, in the absence of new staff or financial resources, the strategies suggested are manageable within the current structure. These strategies have been suggested based on ongoing evaluations/assessments by the Director of Enrollment Management who has identified that the speed and number of communications has been a barrier to moving students through the admissions process more quickly. As well, she has collected data on students who take the placement test to determine that the current system is highly restrictive and hamstringing students getting themselves "registration-eligible" in a timely fashion.

Key Result # 6 - Increase percentage of students receiving some form of financial aid by 2% for Fall 2009

This result is critical to BCC's enrollment given the socio-economic status of many students in the local community. Typically applicants' momentum towards registration eligibility is stalled more through the process of applying for financial aid rather than for admission. And finally, the institution recently received a gift of $11m dollars with the stipulation that it be used strictly for student scholarships. Given that over 50% of the student body typically applies for and receives the Pell Grant, it was decided that this scholarship would be for those who are ineligible for the Pell for income-related reasons. This means that

students from middle and high-income families, who might not otherwise qualify for financial aid, are very likely to receive a full-tuition scholarship up until the point of graduation.

Discussions with the Financial Aid (FA) Director helped to identify that the process of applying for FA is often scary, confusing, and overwhelming for many students, resulting in them not applying at all, or applying so late that they cannot get aid settled in time to pay for their classes. Many do not have the income to pay for classes up front and take a FA reimbursement after the fact. For this reason, strategies suggested include both the establishment of weekly walk-in sessions for the public to get assistance with the process, as well as a shift in local recruiting messages to highlight FA options, ways of getting help to complete the process, and the percentage of students who receive aid. This type of message may be more likely to get prospective students in the door with the promise of assistance on something that typically presents a huge barrier for many of them – finances. Once they have begun the FA process, they can be informed, almost as an aside, about how to complete the admissions process. And finally, part of the confusion for many FA applicants relates to the paperwork and numerous forms that must be read, signed, and/or returned to the college. It is expected that simplifying this process, with the possibility of transferring of forms electronically can help to reduce confusion and wait-time, moving more students towards FA eligibility much more quickly.

Key Result # 7 - The public will experience the college as friendly and helpful

The College has experienced difficulty in managing the growing number of phone calls that come in every day. As well, while most frontline employees go out of their way to help applicants and students, stories still surface about a student who got the runaround, was mistreated, had to deal with a very negative person, or was given the wrong information resulting in missed registration or registration into the wrong class. Like most organizations, BCC could benefit by providing customer service training to its employees on a persistent basis in order to always catch early those individuals or departments who are losing their customer service edge. This can help to create heightened awareness of the importance of the "customer" to enrollment, and ensure that new employees are being properly trained upon entry to the organization. As well, given how understaffed many departments are, some PR problems may be the

result of staff and faculty who have too much do and who cannot always respond to inquiries in a timely fashion. The strategy of installing an information hotline could take some of the phone-call workload off of employees during regular business hours, and offer an option to the public to get immediate answers to their questions day or night.

Key Result # 8 - Increase the percentage of students retained from Fall to Fall by 2% for 2010

Attrition is costing the institution upwards of $1.7m per year in lost FTEs with a retention rate from fall to fall of approximately 45%. While it is to be expected that a mission to serve economically and academically disadvantaged students will increase the likelihood of attrition; it is also true that a 55% loss can hurt enrollment bottom lines. Even the ability to retain a quarter of the 55% lost could save the institution 25% of $1.7m dollars. Certainly it makes intuitive and practical sense to hold onto a currently enrolled student rather than having to recruit a new one. For this reason, the first strategy suggested is that of creating a faculty-staff user-friendly early alert system. The value of this will be that the system can catch students early in the process of their struggles, in addition to creating better communications between faculty and staff about students who need intervention. Ideally, this system could allow faculty to communicate with staff in relation to students' academic, personal, as well as financial issues so that the appropriate intervention could be fashioned. As well, a family appreciation day each semester offers a way for the college to woo the parents, spouses, siblings, children, and other extended family into feeling more comfortable with their relative's decision to attend college. As many of BCC's students are first generation college students, this day offers a way to include families and give them a positive association with the place their father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, wife, or husband go every day to attend classes. Hopefully this will soften their angst and help them find ways to support that relative in their decision to pursue an education.

Key Result # 9 - Establish advising as a cornerstone to student success

Recently the institution established an Advising Taskforce in an effort to acknowledge both the relationship between advising and student retention as well to provide a vehicle for evaluating and enhancing advising practices across campus. Given the research implications of the impact of advising

on student registration and retention (Noel Levitz, 2007-a), the institution would be remiss in ignoring the significance of this dimension of faculty's daily work. Consequently, strategies for addressing this key result include "intrusive advising" training for faculty in combination with ongoing education/awareness training with faculty on retention research as well as the ways in which it plays out at the college. Both of these strategies can help to increase faculty awareness of their impact as advisors on helping students make it through. In particular, intrusive advising training will offer them some specific skills for knowing what to do when faced with a "retainable moment" such as when a student casually comments to an instructor walking through the cafeteria that they are having daycare issues and thinking of just dropping out for now; or a student sitting in a faculty person's office describes with vivid color their distaste for math and sciences, while at the same time indicating they plan to be a medical doctor to please their Dad and Grandpa who were doctors before them. Given that these are conversations that many faculty are privy to on a regular basis, it is important for advisors to feel comfortable with knowing what to say to reach out to the student, even if the student is not actively asking for assistance. Finally, in an effort to recognize the workload being managed and many hats being worn by faculty, the institution needs to pursue the feasibility of creating a freshman advising and registration center staffed with advisors who do nothing but help new students cross the threshold into the world of classes, and then pass them off to program advisors for future registrations. New students are typically more vulnerable to being lost before being enrolled or completing one semester than any other group. Having a center staffed with freshman advisors ensures that new students get the one-on-one assistance they need to make a solid transition, while also taking this responsibility off of the shoulders of busy teaching faculty.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizational Design

Currently the college has an administrative structure that includes a president, a vice-president of academic and student affairs, a dean of student affairs, three deans for each of the three instructional areas (transfer programs, business science programs, and applied science programs) as well as a dean of continuing education, all of whom report to the VP. The college also has a series of directors and

coordinators all of whom report to the dean responsible for their area. Faculty is hired on a full-time, part-time and adjunct basis. They report to the dean for their division and their duties include both teaching and advising of students within their program areas. There are no faculty members exempt from this advising responsibility. The admissions, financial aid, registration, career services, testing, disability services, and pre-health advising offices all fall under the jurisdiction of the dean of student affairs. While student affairs personnel's responsibilities typically involve enrollment and retention-related services outside the classroom, a percentage of staff are expected to participate in teaching the freshman success and study skills course.

Challenges

Some of the challenges the institution will face in realizing this strategic enrollment plan include the level of readiness by the college for change in this area. BCC, as a whole, has only focused on enrollment in reaction to its decline, rather than creating a culture of enrollment awareness at the college where staff and faculty might appreciate not only the importance of enrollment to future survival, but might also recognize how all services and divisions can impact enrollment by virtue of their cooperation (or lack thereof) with one another.

Recommended Changes and Rationale

According to Huddleson (2001), an educational institution can benefit from either a shift in the organizational design to incorporate an enrollment division or the creation of an enrollment committee to initiate enrollment discussion/activities on campus. While it would be ideal for BCC to create an enrollment division separate from student affairs with a new dean to lead it, given the institution's readiness levels for such change, as well as very real human and monetary constraints, a new division is unlikely to be endorsed administration.   A more likely sell, however, might be the creation of an enrollment committee underneath the umbrella of the college's already strong, vital, and credible committee structure. Even preceding this step however, would be the selling of this idea to the President and VP, who must first approve of the creation of a new committee. If created, this committee could serve to address enrollment-related challenges in the following ways:

- Signal to all employees the buy-in and support of senior administration towards enrollment-related issues
- Through a cross-campus membership profile, begin the process of building bridges between different players, different divisions, and different personalities towards a common vision for enrollment
- Establish the Director of Enrollment as the committee's chair and therefore the "enrollment-person-to-go-to". This can serve to build direct relationships between the enrollment services and other key departments on campus
- Begin the process of heightening the entire campus's understanding and awareness of enrollment as an important issue for the college
- Instigate discussions on how to understand and tackle enrollment-related issues potentially resulting in the implementation of some preliminary, pilot-like, campus-wide enrollment initiatives. This builds interest, awareness, confidence, and momentum for the future.

Since this strategic enrollment management plan is being developed to apply directly to BCC, it is very important that "dream-ism" be balanced with "real-ism". Strategies that are easier to fit into the college's current organizational design and that will cost very little will hopefully help to avoid alienating senior administration with "pie-in-the-sky" aspirations. However, it is also important to note that the key results, strategies, and associated activities are written on the assumption that senior administration will, at minimum, be prepared to consider the creation of a new enrollment committee in the near future. As well, many of the strategies have been purposefully designed to make very little extra or new demand on the organizational structure or budgets as they currently exist. However, there are also strategies that are much more complex and involved and it is acknowledged here that these will require significant funds as well as a lot of time/patience to realize.

Strategies As They Relate to Key Results

All 22 strategies described below are evaluated in relation to the current organizational structure. Included for each key result is a brief description of the strategy's associated duties, whether or not the strategy will require new staff or reassignment of duties, who is involved, and whether any new funds are required to achieve the strategy. The Gantt chart on pages 43 through 46 also lays out specific activities and monthly timelines required for implementing each of the 22 strategies.

Key Result # 1 - Enhance college image through effective marketing efforts

Strategy # 1 requires a cooperative effort between the marketing, institutional research, and admissions departments to both determine target markets and any public perception problems and gaps between that perception and the institution's perception of itself. The research plan must be designed to incorporate community (including local business/industry) data, data from all aspects of the enrollment funnel, current student satisfaction data, focus group data, staff, faculty, and administration survey data, and benchmark information. These activities are very much in keeping with the current responsibilities of each of the marketing, institutional research, and admissions offices. The write up for this market plan and image analysis will be led by the IR office with direction and ongoing feedback from the other two offices as the report develops. This strategy will incur a cost of approximately $200 for goodies to be provided for focus groups and community listening forums.

Strategy # 2 is within the mandate of the marketing office that will be expected to take the lead in identifying current and former students who can be profiled to the public through various mediums. The marketing office will need to enlist the assistance of the entire campus in identifying these students and then will be expected to conduct interviews and promote the write-up through its own office. This strategy will not require any additional funds.

Key Result # 2 – Increase/enhance recruiting efforts to reach target groups

Strategy # 3 will be accomplished through a cooperative effort between the marketing and admissions offices. Recruiting materials are currently developed this way and so do not add any new responsibilities to either's portfolio. However, this initiative will require enhanced communication and a truly 'cooperative' spirit as both offices must have a shared vision for the project, and respect each other's input/participation in the process. Through previous discussions it has already been determined that new materials can be created in-house (rather than outsourcing) which will save the institution funds, and allow for lesser amounts of material to be created at one time in the event that their content needs to be changed or updated. The college has an in-house printing service that can handle these projects.

Strategies # 4 and 5 can be led by the admissions department, which is in keeping with its current responsibilities. However, these events will also need to be coordinated with the marketing department, the financial aid department, student affairs personnel and instructional divisions. Again, none of these activities is outside the current responsibilities and involvements of all departments mentioned. Activities involved will include setting dates for the events, advertising the dates in various locations, creating a plan of activities for participants in both events, and creating 'assignments' for different areas to take on toward the setup and execution of the events. Strategies 4 and 5 will require approximately $300 total for goodies and other fun gifts for participants.

Key Result # 3 – Improve working relationships with local high schools

Strategies 6 & 7 are the responsibility of the admissions department and fall within its current mandate. Strategy # 6 needs to be handled by the Director of Enrollment to ensure that visits to each of the four local high schools do, in fact, create positive P.R. and that Guidance Counselors and other school staff feel they have the ear of someone with responsibility/influence at the college on admissions-related matters. Strategy # 7 can be added to the responsibilities of the part-time recruiter, the career counselor, the admissions administrative assistant and the vocational/technical freshman advisor. The admissions counseling activities of these visits will be consistent with type of work each of these employees already does on campus - they will simply schedule visits to do the same thing at the local high schools. Each of the four employees will take a designated high school. This will result in all of the four high schools receiving one admission-related visit per month in addition to one monthly visit from the Director of Enrollment for P.R.-related reasons. The costs associated with these visits will involve mileage only and should tally approximately $300 per year.

Key Result # 4 - Establish program mix to meet local employment needs

Strategy # 8 will be rolled into the market study and image analysis research plan being handled by the marketing, institutional research, and admissions offices as noted in strategy # 2. The plan will simply incorporate questions to local employers and business/industry leaders that help to inform the college's program offerings. No additional funds will be required.

While strategy # 9 falls within the mandate of senior administration, it will be considered a new initiative given the institution's lack of program review/evaluation procedures to date. It is recommended that the initial task of researching and preparing a proposal for program review/evaluation fall to the newly created enrollment committee. A working subcommittee will be created that includes representation from enrollment services, and each of the instructional divisions. This subcommittee's mandate will be to conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups where needed with employees and students to determine enrollment and employment outcomes as criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of a current program. As well, a three step procedure will be created for programs identified as 'in jeopardy' to allow deeper review/analysis to occur to ensure that the program is not reduced or canceled if it can be enhanced through an intervention. These steps will include divisional faculty, deans, and then senior administration (in that order for review). There are no new funds associated with this strategy at this time.

Key Result # 5 – Students will experience the admissions process as quick and user-friendly.
Strategies 10 & 11 fall within the current mandate of the admissions office and will involve creating and implementing a new method of communicating with applicants. These strategies will speed up the process of communicating with those already motivated to attend the college, and will also create a more efficient procedure for admissions staff responsible for these mailings. These strategies will not involve any new costs.

Strategy # 12 will involve the admissions and testing offices with the leadership of the Dean of Student Affairs. Testing responsibilities at the college have typically included placement testing for new and current student college entrance in addition to GED testing and pre-health testing required for qualified RN and LPN candidates as well as the scheduling of orientation/registration dates for new students. The testing department is woefully understaffed for all of these responsibilities and placement testing has consequently been designed more to alleviate workload problems than to provide flexible, timely testing for students. For this reason, it is proposed that responsibility for GED testing be reassigned to the GED/Adult High School (AHS) Department where courses/tutoring are offered towards these diplomas. This will require a part-time testing person to be hired for both the GED/AHS department as well as the

college entrance placement testing department. As well, the college entrance placement testing department will have its testing schedule redesigned to provide testing for more months of the year in a computerized format. As part of this change, the admissions office will have to take on a new system of freshman orientation sessions for new students to ensure that these students get the orientation the need to both understand their registration next steps, and to ensure a successful handoff to faculty advisors for registration. This is already handled by the admissions department, but in a different format from what is being suggested here. This change in orientation scheduling must include instructional divisions to ensure that scheduling of these sessions will coincide with advisors' guarantee that students can be registered the same day they receive their orientation. The addition of two new part-time testers will require approximately $12,000 per year for part-time temporary positions with no benefits.

Key Result # 6 - Increase the percentage of students receiving some form of financial aid by 2% for Fall 2009.

Strategies 13 & 14 will heavily involve the financial aid (FA) department in conjunction with the admission department. Strategy # 13 will include a change to duties for both FA and admissions staff to take turns "manning" scheduled walk-in assistance times. These activities are currently handled by staff in both departments only across the counter as students inquire. For this reason, a yearly schedule of walk-in times for these staff to handle will be created, taking peak enrollment times into consideration. Cross-training will also need to occur to ensure that both FA and admissions staff feel confident of counseling students in relation to each other's departments. It is anticipated that these sessions can both help students to apply earlier, to feel more confident of the process, and to get admissions counseling at the same time. Strategy # 14 will be supported through the implementation of strategy # 13. However, in addition to walk-in FA assistance times, admissions-related recruiting materials and communications will be reviewed. The goal will be to ensure that FA options and assistance as well as the percentage of student receiving aid, and the availability of the in-house Powers Service Scholarship for those who do not qualify for the Pell Grant for income-related reasons, are all actively and loudly advertised to the local community of potential learners. Any desired changes to recruiting materials will be incorporated into strategy # 3. No new funds are required at this time.

Strategy # 15 will primarily involve the FA and admission departments establishing a communications audit procedure of the materials and communications that currently come out of the FA department. The purpose of this audit will be to determine ways in which current FA materials/communications content or procedures can be simplified to make the process clearer and quicker for the public. The audit will include selected staff, faculty, and students to solicit their input on materials. Costs associated with this change include goodies required for any focus groups that might be held and are expected to total approximately $50.

Key Result # 7 – The public will experience the college as friendly and helpful

Strategy # 16 will require a commitment on the part of senior administration, instructional divisions and student services. It is expected that professionals will be hired initially to conduct a kick-off customer service training for all frontline personnel from student services and instructional divisions. After this initial training, the Director of Enrollment, Career Center Director, and Dean of Student Affairs will take on the task of conducting semester-ly brush-ups for frontline staff. This is a new duty for all three of these managers but the sharing of this responsibility will significantly reduce the impact on their respective workloads. This strategy will require a cost commitment of approximately $1,500 to bring in a customer-service specialist and to provide lunch for workshop participants.

Strategy # 17 will be coordinated through the student affairs department under the leadership of the Dean. This is a new duty for the department and for the Dean. However, after a voicemail box within the current voicemail system has been identified and a script prepared, future time commitments will involve a semester-ly review of information to be updated by student services managers in combination with someone recording the new information each term. There is no new cost associated with this strategy.

Key Result # 8 - Increase pecentage of students retained from Fall to Fall by 2% for 2010

Strategy # 18 will be the responsibility of the Dean of Student Affairs. An early alert system was administered by the Dean in the past. When the new record system was implemented in 2006 it was less compatible with the way the early alert system was managed through the computer. Subsequently, it was

decided that the early alert system would be extinguished. However, given how many institutions across the nation cite an early alert system as a best retention practice (Noel-Levitz, 2007), it is unfortunate that this decision was made without any brainstorming about how procedures might be changed to be more compatible with the new record system.

And so, while this duty has fallen to the Dean of Student Affairs in the past, the need for a new early alert system adds new workload to her regime until getting it off the ground. The goal here is to create a new early alert system that can surpass the old one in its ability to build bridges between faculty and staff on behalf of students, as well as to allow anyone to identify 'academic' and 'personal' issues as potential attrition-risks. This will require the Dean to create a participatory process with student services and instructional divisions to design this new system. There are no new costs associated with this strategy at this time.

Strategy # 19 will be led by the admissions department. This is a new responsibility for the Director of Enrollment and will require assistance from other student services personnel and faculty in its execution. A parents' night will involve inviting parents/families of incoming students before the fall term has begun to both inform them of college opportunities, to expose them to some of the learnings students will undertake, and to encourage their support/buy-in for the enrollment of their relative. This activity will be held only in early August and will include a cost of $500 for goodies, gifts, and fun activities.

Key Result # 9 – Establish advising as a cornerstone to student success.

Strategy # 20 will be assigned to the Career Center as a new responsibility. Career Center personnel are not only well-trained student services personnel, but serve as pre-health advisors. The Career Center Counselor will be responsible for locating an appropriate speaker to address 'intrusive advising' concepts at the August professional development day. As well, she will create an 'instrusive advising mini-workshop' based on the initial training to be offered to new faculty each fall, and offered to current faculty through optional ½ day workshops offered at the same professional days in August and February each

year. This strategy will incur an initial cost of $1,500 for the guest speaker. No additional costs are expected.

Strategy # 21 will be handled through the enrollment committee. The newsletter will contain a column on retention issues/strategies and will serve to inform the campus community about current students' retention issues as well as to highlight any effective strategies currently being used by faculty advisors on campus. All employees will be encouraged to submit retention ideas for this column. This newsletter, while the domain of the enrollment committee, will add new responsibilities to the Enrollment Director who will have to collect data, and coordinate submissions each semester in order to be able to write up the newsletter. There is no new cost associated with this strategy.

Strategy # 22 involves leadership by the Enrollment Director to pursue the feasibility of a freshman advising center. This will involve a participatory process of working with instructional Deans to discuss the value of this idea to their divisions and ways to pursue permanent funding for three new advisors. While an vocational/tech advisor for one division has recently been hired, this position is based on temporary funds and does not guarantee the future of this role. If this strategy is budget-approved the Director of Enrollment and instructional Deans will need to create a coordinated approach for freshman advisors to hookup with new students the same day as new student orientations occur, as well as to conduct pre-admissions counseling for applicants in their division. It is expected that these advisors will report to the Director of Enrollment and so this is a new responsibility for her. This strategy will cost approximately $60,000 for three advisors at 25 hours a week each with benefits as well as three computers.

Activities Associated with Strategies

While the strategy map's strategies offer some concrete ways of accomplishing their associated key result, in reality each strategy will require the completion of a varietyof tasks for those assigned responsibility. A fuller list of activities and timelines for the implementation of each strategy is show in the Gantt chart on pages 43 through 46. It is important to note that while many of the tasks identified in the

chart will commence at the same time, the distribution of responsibility for different tasks will help to not overburden any one office. Consequently, many of the proposed strategies can beinitiated around the same time and will hopefully be implemented before the end of 2008. The reason for such a short timeline on so many of these activities is that BCC needs to begin at the beginning. Because the college has not truly strategized its enrollment-related efforts in years, this plan is designed to tackle change at a a basic level, starting with efficiencies rather than brand new projects. With nothing more than some tweaking to long-held traditions, the college has a chance o gain some valuable ground in relation to its marketplace.

ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES (Gantt Chart)

	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Ju 08	Au 08	Se 08	Oct 08	No 08	De 08
Strategy # 1												
Design Market Study and Image Analysis Research Plan	X											
Collect Data		X	X	X	X							
Write-up Report for Senior Team					X							
Present to Management Team						X						
Present to all Employees								X				
Strategy # 2												
Identify method of collecting potential "profiles"	X	X	X									
Identify appropriate venues/mediums	X	X	X									
Create/promote profile of current student						X			X			
Create/promote profile of former student							X				X	
Strategy # 3												
Meet and review market study/image analysis data						X						
Determine design and content for new materials						X	X					
Print initial materials								X				
Review materials for content/format change												X
Strategies # 4 & 5												
Plan and advertise event dates						X						
Design activities for events						X	X					
Create assignments/timelines for involved departments						X	X					
Purchase goodies/gifts					X				X		X	
Hold Events						X	X			X	X	X
Strategy # 6												
Director coordinates/conducts high school visits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategy # 7												
Assign staff to one high school each	X											
Conduct training for staff to ensure quality visits	X											
Staff coordinates/conducts visits with their high school		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hold semester-ly debrief sessions with staff				X								X
Strategy # 8												
Mirror timing/activities of strategy # 2												
Strategy # 9												
Identify sub-committee from enrollment committee	X											
Sub-committee determines data collection plan	X	X										
Data is collected		X	X	X	X							
Proposal prepared					X							
Proposal given to president and VP						X						

Rewrites						X								
Approved proposal presented to management team							X							
Rewrites							X							
Approved proposal sent to campus community								X						
Final Rewrites								X						
Proposal sent to Board for final approval									X					
Strategies # 10 & 11														
Meet with admissions staff to brainstorm potential changes to communications	X													
Create template postcards for quick ability to communicate next admission steps for applicant	X	X												
Create a template welcome package for applicants with detailed information about attending the college	X	X												
Implement new procedure beginning of next term			X											
Strategy # 12														
Submit proposal for two new testing technicians	X													
Move GED testing to GED/AHS department					X									
Create proposal for new college entrance testing schedule	X													
Create proposal for new orientation	X													
Solicit input of instructional divisions in new orientation plan		X	X	X	X									
Commence with new testing and orientation procedures								X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategies # 13														
Establish a location and schedule of walk-in times	X													
Meet with FA & admissions staff to determine assigned times	X	X												
Provide cross-training in FA & Admissions as well as uniformity in quality/content offered to walk-in applicants		X	X											
Commence walk-in sessions					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategy # 14														
Enrollment and FA Directors meet to determine method of communicating FA information as a recruiting tool	X													
All materials are revised and reprinted		X	X											
New materials are used for recruiting/communications purposes					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategy # 15														
Determine materials/letters to be reviewed during audit	X													
Establish a plan to identify reviewers and process for soliciting input		X												
Conduct audit			X	X										

Redesign materials/communications				X	X							
Commence using new material/communications						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategy # 16												
Prepare a proposal of training for senior administration	X											
Work with all divisions to establish a workshop date			X	X								
Locate/hire a vendor to deliver training				X	X							
Hold Training								X				
Conduct semester-ly brush-ups on key concepts		X						X				
Strategy # 17												
Research steps involved in creating a 24 hour line for public within current voicemail system	X											
Hold meeting of student services managers to determine information to be included and current mediums for advertising the 24 hour info hotline to the public		X										
Work with maintenance department to create/record voicemail system with "options" for different types of information		X										
Advertise 24 hour hotline			X	X	X	X		X			X	
Implement 24 hour hotline						X						
Student services managers meeting semester-ly to determine updated/new information for voicemail.				X			X					X
Strategy # 18												
Dean holds meeting of stakeholders to address the creation of and issues related to a new early alert system		X										
Design system and solicit participation commitment from divisions			X	X	X	X	X					
Implement academic issues early alert system							X					
Implement personal issues early alert system										X		
Hold post-implementation meetings to tweak system												X
Strategy # 19												
Enlist the support of the enrollment committee in determining an appropriate date for this event	X											
Work with representatives from student services and faculty to design the day and solicit commitment for its set-up and execution		X	X	X								
Actively advertise the event through current publications, and mail outs to families of incoming students				X	X	X	X					
Hold event								X				

Activity												
Strategy # 20												
Prepare a proposal to senior administration to financially support a guest speaker at the fall PD day	X											
Identify an appropriate guest speaker		X										
Coordinate the speaker's needs with those responsible for planning the all-campus workshop at the fall PD day			X									
Hold Training								X				
Design a mini-workshop based on the initial training									X			
Offer mini-workshop for new faculty each fall								X				
Offer mini-workshops as an optional 2 hour workshops at following February and August PD days		X						X				
Strategy # 21												
Enrollment committee will promote the importance of faculty sharing advising/retention techniques in a public format		X										
Call for submissions will be put out			X	X								
Column written					X	X	X					
Newsletter published in electronic/paper format in May, July, and December of each year					X		X					X
Strategy # 22												
Enrollment Director meets with instructional Deans to discuss the design of a freshman advising center			X									
Proposal written/ presented to senior administration				X	X							
Hire three permanent freshman advisors (one per instructional division)						X						
Determine location for center with computers/phones						X						
Commence with freshman advising services								X	X	X	X	X

Budget Expectations

This strategic plan has a total price tag of $76,350. Of these costs, 89% are salary-related; 2% will go to purchasing goodies or paying for mileage; 4% will cover outsourcing costs to bring in experienced trainers; and 5% will go to the purchase of three new computers. Should senior administration prefer to hold-off on hiring new personnel and associated computers, the financial commitment for the remainder of the activities will tally just 6% of $76,350 or $4,581. Costs associated with this plan have been kept at a minimum by design. Given the college's lack of monetary resources the motivation to provide funding to

such matters is relatively low. Consequently, the less the financial investment that needs to be made, the more likely senior administration is to give this plan a chance.

IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

Philosophy and Strategies for Supporting Implementation

1) Critical to the plan's success is an attitude of "adaptive learning" (Bryson, 2004, p.238) or a sound balance between "planning" and "letting it flow/go". Planning is an important part of setting enrollment up for success, but it is best used in conjunction with a flexible approach to prevent problems, mistakes, and changes from derailing the plan from a too rigid path. This approach will be incorporated by the Director of Enrollment who will be responsible for chairing the enrollment committee (see below). It is hoped that this attitude will trickle down to others. As well, ongoing check-ins on progress of various projects will help to catch problems early and train implementers to have a "problem-solving" attitude in their work rather than a "it didn't work….the sky is falling" attitude. Research shows that commercial planes are actually off-course 90% of the time, with constant readjustments bringing the plane back on track throughout the entire flight.

2) Activities have been assigned, where possible, to the departments typically responsible for related projects. For example, the market analysis will be conducted by the marketing office, the institutional research office, and the admissions office. This is within their current mandate to do.

3) As well, approximately 50% of activities are designed to departments rethinking how they do business, finding new ways of fulfilling current work objectives, and making the outcome more efficient for both the student and the employees responsible for doing the work. For example, the admissions department will devise new ways of communicating with students that will speed up the process for students but also make the mailings a simpler process for admissions staff to handle. These types of activities offer incentive to staff to implement these changes as they will positively impact their workload.

4) Employees will be kept informed of advances, changes, and successes through the electronic delivery of a semester-ly enrollment newsletter. As well, representatives on the enrollment

committee (see below) will be strongly encouraged to bring committee business back to their constituents, as well as to bring the feedback and concerns of their constituents back to the committee.

Strategies for Promoting Buy-in and Task Completion

1) For major projects such as a market analysis, or the creation of an early alert system, or the redesign of campus-wide testing procedures, participation by key stakeholders will be guaranteed and input/feedback from secondary stakeholders solicited. This participation and input keeps important players involved, up-to-date, and in a position to influence the outcome. It is anticipated that this strategy will help to reduce the amount of extra work or cross-departmental work any one department must take on, therefore supporting their willingness to buy-in to the process.

2) The president and VP's support will be solicited and they will be asked to send a strong message of support to the campus community for the strategic plan and all its associated activities.

3) Through the enrollment newsletter as well as other cross-campus forums (emails, professional development gatherings for all employees, etc.) the contributions and successes of staff and faculty will be publicly profiled.

4) The Director of Enrollment will work to find champions of enrollment planning in different divisions and will foster those relationships.

Enrollment Committee Creation

An enrollment committee is being proposed to promote cross-campus buy-in to the strategic enrollment plan, and to assist with the real-life design and implementation of the plan. The college's current committee structure is viewed by employees as a viable, legitimate structure where committees are allowed to tackle meaningful subjects and have influence over project outcomes. This bodes well for proposing a new committee designed to join the ranks of an already strong, credible committee structure at the college. Committee membership will include representation from across all departments, including

students. A good process and a safe environment to talk about important (sometimes controversial) topics at the committee table will help to reinforce that the committee's work belongs to everyone.

<u>Membership</u>

- Dean of Student Affairs
- Deans from three instructional areas
- Three faculty (one from each instructional area)
- Director of Enrollment Management (Chair
- Director of Financial Aid
- Career Center Director
- Three staff (from student affairs)
- Three students (one from each instructional area)
- VP of Student and Academic Affairs

<u>Voting and Quorum Structure</u>

- One voting manager from student affairs (dean or director)
- One voting manager from the instructional side (dean)
- One faculty member
- One student affairs staff person
- One student
- VP of Student and Academic Affairs

<u>Duties</u>

- Participate in discussions in good-faith by recognizing no one department's agenda can overtake the committee's work
- Poll, as much as possible, constituent groups to ensure that their feedback/input is brought to the table
- Take committee discussions and decisions back to constituents for input
- Participate in temporary task forces or advisory groups where needed
- Provide support-suggestions and advice to departments and individuals struggling with implementation issues
- Act as a "go to" person for enrollment projects that fall within their area
- Participate in semester-ly reflection meetings to review progress, discuss any "process" issues, and to plan for future activities.

Ethical Concerns

1 – It will be important for the committee process to support a "building bridges" attitude among student affairs and instructional side employees. Like many institutions, there is a long history of division between these two areas. This committee offers a practical opportunity to help players from both sides to understand one another better, and to pool their resources towards a common goal. The long-standing "Hatfield-McCoy" feud needs not to be watered or fed to help begin the process of diminishing this tension on campus.

2 – Given the college's history of lack of staffing the plan and the committee need to be very sensitive to not unnecessarily burdening employees with more workload. While there may be times when certain people are asked to take on an extra activity for a limited amount of time, this needs to be done with the employee's cooperation (not coercing them) and with a definite and foreseeable time-limit.

3 – Where ever relevant, the appropriate leaders need to be pulled into the process before a project is implemented in their area. It is unfair and unethical and unprofessional to assign workload to employees without the consent or the input of their supervisor.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluating the nine key results of the strategic enrollment plan above will involve both formative (during) and summative (final) measures of success. This is consistent with Noel-Levitz (2005) who discuss that one of the principles of good evaluation practice is when assessment is "ongoing, not episodic" (p.2). Formative measures, then, will help to identify whether planning and implementation are "on track", whether or not different departments and individuals are able to maintain task timelines, and whether or not appropriate activity related to the result is happening. Summative measures will reflect final results in the form of increased percentages, total headcounts of involved participants/students (depending on the result), gap analysis of pre-post surveys, and numbers of students or employees (depending on the result) completed the appropriate process or workshop, respectively. For activities that are designed to

see results by the end of a semester, weekly and bi-weekly formative timelines will be used. If results are expected to take a year or more, formative timelines will be monthly or semester-ly.

Table IV

Key Result	Formative Measures	Summative Measures
1) **Enhance college image through effective marketing efforts**	• Meet marketing/image study deadlines • Pilot target group materials to students and employees before final versions are created • Meet timelines on yearly plan for posting current/former success stories	• Pre-post survey of community stakeholders • Pre-post survey of student focus groups
2) **Increase/enhance recruiting efforts to reach target markets**	• Per workshop headcount • Survey results from workshop participants	• Total headcount attended workshops • Of students who attended workshops, number who applied, completed admissions process, enrolled

3) **Improve working relationships with local high schools**	• Monthly headcount of students meeting with college staff onsite at high school
	• Monthly number of meetings with high school staff to discuss college issues
	• Monthly count of complaints/suggestions by high school staff
		• Pre-post survey of guidance counselors at spring luncheon
		• Yearly total number of students who met with college staff
		• Of students who met with college staff:
		  - # who applied
		  - # who completed admissions process
		  - # who enrolled

4) **Establish program mix to meet local employment needs**	• Meeting of "plan" timelines to develop a program review model • Ongoing feedback of key stakeholders as to the feasibility of developing model • Draft plan sent to local employers/industry leaders for input/feedback	• Pre-post survey of community, employees, and students on program mix • Number of employees aware of program review model • Number of graduates who secure local employment
5) **Students will experience the admissions process as quick and user-friendly**	•	
6) **Increase percentage of students receiving some form of financial aid by 2% for Fall 2009**	• Headcount of students attending monthly walk-in FA counseling sessions and scheduled workshops	• Total percentage increase of aid awarded by fall 2009 • Average timeframe of students' application and

	• Ensure meeting of timelines for changing admissions communications/advertising strategies to include FA as a key recruiting tool • Bi-weekly review of FA communications-out to ensure timely response • Bi-weekly review of FA documents received from students • Bi-weekly count of FA submitted and completed applications • Semester-ly percentage increase of aid awarded	completion process •
7) **The public will experience the college as helpful and user-friendly**	• Headcount of workshop attendees • Monthly review of responses to short market survey results for online and paper applicants • Weekly hits on new 24 hour information line	• Semester-ly hits on 24 hour information line • Results of post-image-survey done in Key Result # 1 • Overall semester-ly patterns in image questions posted in online and paper application
8) **Increase percentage of students retained by 2% for fall 2010**	• Meeting of timelines to create new "early alert" system • Number of students identified as "at risk" on a monthly basis • Number of identified students moved through the "early alert" system • Number of identified students retained to next semester after being identified/supported • Number of participants at family appreciation event	• Number of "at-risk" students identified on a yearly basis • Number of students retained 2008 and 2009 and 2010
9) **Establish advising as a cornerstone to student success**	• Numbers attending semester-ly training • Meeting of timelines for email/newsletter communications on advising issues • Semester-ly results of workshop surveys • Meeting of timelines to research and establish a report on the feasibility of a freshman advising center	• Pre-post survey results of employees and students on advising successes/challenges • Establishment of a freshman advising center

CONCLUSION

BCC has a unique "open-door" mission that, all by itself, creates many challenges in enrolling and retaining students. Ignoring its own "tall-order" mission and putting its head in the sand in relation to all of the external challenges and demographic changes swirling around the institution would be akin to political and social suicide. This is not to say the process will be easy or simple. In fact, in an effort to "keep it real", it is recommended that BCC take Bryson's (2004) advice of "having realistic hopes for the process" (p.91). As important as it is for BCC to humbly face its own strengths and weaknesses, and bravely stare down its external opportunities and challenges; it is just as important for the institution to be patient with itself as it experiences growing pains, setbacks, resistance, and negativity. As Bryon (2004) goes on to say "The strategic planning process is…inherently prone to fail because it is deliberately disruptive." (p.91). And so, the value of undertaking a SWOC analysis is only realized as the institution moves forward, endures criticism and opposition, and then keeps on moving.

BCC, like so many community colleges, faces barriers in the process of both identifying and addressing institutional priorities. However, the institution does have the ability to begin taking baby steps towards more strategic enrollment-related priorities. And the timing for this could not be better as the potential for missed opportunities and pending threats in the external world have growing power to jeopardize BCC's current market position. But it is never too late…so long as the institution is functioning, enrolling, teaching, and graduating, there is the opportunity to also re-strategize, change direction, branch out, and renew its mission in the light of a new millennium.

The above strategic enrollment management plan is a tall order. But then optimism never hurt anyone. And speaking of optimistic interpretations, it must be noted that for an institution that has done few formal market studies, limited evaluations of its public image, and has not had a strategic enrollment plan in the past, it has somehow still been able to sustain a 2000+ enrollment level fairly consistently over the past eight years. Whether this is because 2000+ is and always will be the baseline enrollment for the local community; because the economic/demographic gods have been unusually kind to the institution; or

because the college's previous methods were actually fairly effective given its mission and the needs of the local community - is hard to know. But two things are for sure. One – that enrollment is now declining and there is a chaotic tizzy on-campus about why and how to solve the problem; and two – that despite how well thought out and articulated the proposed strategies and activities may be, they are no more than words on a page if the process under which they are implemented is not both inclusive and participatory.

While the ultimate goal with this plan is to increase enrollment for BCC, this goal is not sustainable without college-wide buy-in. This is consistent with Bryson (2004) who identified that the real "strategic planning mountain" is the fussy, tricky, sticky business of getting people out of their comfort zone, into a boat, pushed away from the shore, and moving towards a new one. And so, whereas strategies and activities comprise the text of the plan - "buy-in" is the sub-text. This is an important distinction since it changes the focus of this plan from being intensely survival-istic in a world of enrollment threats; to one that is deeply optimism-istic and prepared to bank on the capacity of the college to change and evolve.

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.
The most certain way to succeed is always to try just
one more time."

---Thomas Edison---

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