

PAUL D. CAMP COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SWOT REPORT SUMMARY

SWOT - STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES,
OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS



Highlights of Faculty, Staff, Board, and
Community Stakeholder Feedback

September 2012 – February 2013

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WorkShaper

Paul D. Camp Community College SWOT Analysis

In preparation for strategic planning, Paul D. Camp Community College leaders decided to obtain input about the college's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats that could significantly impact the college over the next three to five years. This activity is known as a SWOT analysis. The college contracted with Jacqueline Anderson, co-owner of WorkShaper, to conduct all SWOT-related activities.

As a first step, over 100 faculty and staff members attending an in-service session on September 7, 2012 were invited to offer their input for the SWOT analysis. Results from the in-service SWOT session were then sent to all faculty and staff with an invitation to provide additional, confidential input and then to identify the items they felt were most important for the future of the college. This report includes the top 15 strengths and weaknesses and the top 11-12 opportunities and strengths selected by faculty and staff as most important.

After gathering input from faculty and staff, five feedback sessions were held with college stakeholders. The first two sessions were with the Local College Board and the Foundation Board. Sessions were then held at the Paul D. Camp Hobbs Suffolk Campus, the Franklin Campus, and the Smithfield Center with approximately 40 representatives from the business, academic, government, religious, and arts communities. Individuals attending these sessions were first asked about the changes that they see unfolding in their communities. They were then asked what they need and expect from the college. Finally, they were invited to provide their perspectives on the college's strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities, and threats.

A summary of findings and recommendations from all of the SWOT sessions is presented in this report.

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Executive Summary

Several themes emerged through the SWOT sessions, the most common of which was marketing. There was consensus among all involved that the college should do more and better marketing to reach a broader audience in the community it serves. Many marketing ideas were suggested including expanding the use of advertising and social media and seeking more publicity for the college to highlight its academic and workforce development programs. A specific idea that was presented was for the college's president to work more closely with local government officials to engage them as ambassadors for the college. It was also suggested that the college continue to host community events such as movie night to bring potential customers to all college locations for a first-hand look at what it has to offer.

Targeting specific audiences was stressed as a marketing strategy. In addition to promoting the college to parents and students, several other target audiences were suggested. These include veterans, people seeking training in skilled trades, working class individuals, people who may be learning disabled, and corporations.

There was broad agreement that communicating the financial advantage of attending a community college would attract more people to Paul D. Camp. Dual enrollment and guaranteed transfer to a four-year college or university were seen as two important programs that help to make a college education more affordable. Continued emphasis should be placed on communicating these programs to school leaders, parents, and students. In general, it was felt that a strong and expanded marketing program would enable the college to attract more students and improve its ability to compete with for-profit educational institutions and neighboring community colleges.

Several themes emerged as significant college strengths. Foremost on the list was the college's reputation. The college is seen as welcoming, family-oriented, and affordable. It is viewed as flexible and able to quickly meet a variety of constituents' needs. In addition, the college is seen as an organization that strives to align its curriculum with the needs of the community. Contributing to the positive reputation are the college's long-term faculty, experienced staff, and leadership team, which were viewed as significant strengths for the college.

Presidential leadership also emerged as a key strength. Paul D. Camp's president has a positive image in the community and is viewed as passionate about representing the college to the constituents it serves. In addition, the president's ability to build relationships and partnerships in the community is viewed as a strength that contributes to the college's good reputation.

There was broad agreement that the college's focus on students, the academic programs it provides (e.g., nursing and dual enrollment), and workforce development services are significant college strengths. The college's presence in Smithfield was viewed positively and there was common agreement to make the Smithfield center a more attractive destination for students. In addition, there were suggestions to expand the use of career development centers, which are now located on both campuses and the Smithfield Center.

Many opportunities for the college were highlighted. There was consensus that Suffolk has the greatest growth potential for the college due to population and business growth. Several ideas were offered for the expansion of existing education and training programs or the addition of new programs. Specific ideas presented include technology training for businesses, additional health care programs (e.g., physical therapy assistant), adult education programs, classes to recertify educators, law enforcement

training, and education to help inmates successfully re-enter society. There was consensus that more vocational programs and a greater emphasis on skilled trades should be stressed.

Inadequate preparation for college or for employment was seen as a significant issue faced by the college and by local employers. The college should explore ways to combat this issue so that students enter college ready to learn and employees launch their careers with the right work ethic. There was strong agreement that the college should strengthen collaboration and interaction with the K-12 education system and should consider reaching out to the Franklin city school system to offer assistance as the school system works on its improvement plan.

Looking inward, the college should seek ways to strengthen teamwork, internal services, and support among departments. In the past four years, state employees have not received a salary increase. This, along with some staffing challenges, has contributed to a dip in morale that is a current concern that should continue to be assessed and addressed going forward.

Finally, there were many positive comments about the college's recent successes in fund raising and acquiring grants. This will create many opportunities to improve the college's service to the community and to increase professional staffing.

Stakeholder Input: Changes in the Communities Served by Paul D. Camp Community College

Board members and community representatives attending the stakeholder sessions were asked what changes they saw unfolding in the communities served by Paul D. Camp Community College. In addition, they were asked for their opinions on the areas with the greatest growth potential.

Session participants indicated that, over the past few years, the geographic area served by Paul D. Camp Community College has suffered job losses due to the closure of several businesses, including manufacturing plants that employed hundreds of people. The reduction in employment opportunities that followed resulted in people moving out of the area to take jobs elsewhere. However, signs of improvement are evident in the business community, although the improvement is progressing at a slow pace. Increased business (especially in Suffolk) is expected from ports and from planned changes to Route 460 and growth is anticipated in the retail sector.

Although some individuals felt that the area will remain a commuter community, others saw an increase in people coming to the area for new employment opportunities (e.g., Green Mountain Coffee Plant). However, given the economic uncertainty that remains, stakeholders felt that people need to prepare for other careers and for a loss of income and saw this as area of opportunity for Paul D. Camp Community College to provide helpful services to those individuals as the college has in the past.

The population in the area was seen by participants as undergoing changes as well. There is a sense that young people are moving out of the area and college graduates are not returning home to work. The community is aging, as reflected by an increase in people 65 years of age and older and an increase in military and other retirees moving to the area. With retirees come opportunities. Participants felt that the college could provide classes for lifelong learning and could augment its adjunct instructor or faculty base with retirees who may be looking for second careers. Stakeholders see the area as becoming more ethnically diverse, but expressed a concern that people new to the area do not have a connection to community. Participants felt that improvements in services such as health care, sports, cultural arts, services for children, and trash pick-up are making the area more attractive.

When asked about the areas with the greatest growth potential, opinions were diverse. In general, people placed Suffolk at the top of the list due to its growing population and new businesses (e.g., distribution centers). Population growth is also expected in West Hampton Roads and in North Suffolk, which is served by Tidewater Community College. However, others expect growth in Smithfield/Isle of Wight, and in Franklin due to the influx of new industries and businesses. Participants felt that work being done at a regional level could increase opportunities in all areas served and that the greatest opportunity for growth for Paul D. Camp Community College is to align its services and programs with the needs of local industries.

Stakeholder Input: Constituent Needs and Expectations

Board members and community representatives attending the stakeholder sessions were asked what they need and expect from Paul D. Camp Community College.

Constituents are relying on Paul D. Camp Community College to be a local resource that offers a variety of educational choices for children preparing for post-secondary education, for adults seeking continuing education, and for businesses that need a partner for workforce development. Stakeholders mentioned the need for more STEM-H classes (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health), additional certification programs, a continuation of dual enrollment classes, more online classes, and more foreign language classes; specifically, Mandarin and Spanish.

Employers want to hire people who have critical thinking skills and are able to solve problems and work well with others. Some employers see a benefit in having the college train the workforce instead of relying on their own on-the-job training efforts. They are looking for people trained in skilled trades and crafts and would like to see more opportunities for apprenticeships and internships. They are relying on Paul D. Camp Community College to train people for the jobs and businesses of the future and to match the college's workforce certifications to industry needs.

An important part of job training is preparing people for the responsibilities of employment. Employers often encounter people who do not know how to fill out a job application or who make poor decisions that cause problems at work, such as missing work. In some cases, these individuals also lack basic life skills such as preparing a budget that is based on a paycheck or knowing what bill to pay first. If the college could help people be "job ready," it would benefit the business community.

Members of the business community also saw a need to continue entrepreneurial support and education to help local people remain in the area and have successful businesses.

Constituents see training in technology as vital in the workplace and in the classroom. They feel it is important for Paul D. Camp Community College to train students on the latest technology and its appropriate use. In addition, they feel it is important to teach instructors how young people are using technology today. Beyond practical training in technology, constituents feel it is important to evaluate the implications of technology on communication skills and on the development of knowledge and skills when technology is used to perform tasks formerly done by people (e.g., calculating change at a cash register).

Internal Strengths

In a SWOT analysis, strengths are defined as the things the college does best. Stakeholders, faculty, and staff were asked to share their thoughts on the college's strengths. Feedback primarily fell into four categories: reputation, student focus, academic programs, and workforce development services.

Reputation

Session participants stated that Paul D. Camp Community College has built a good reputation and is considered a “gem in the community with its programs and workforce development.” The college’s audience has broadened over time and is no longer seen as an educational institution for a small, select group of people. Opinions about the college are changing in a positive way, with its many success stories contributing to the respect it has earned. Overall, session participants felt that the college’s reputation is built on longevity, affordability, and flexibility. It is seen as a welcoming, family-oriented educational institution.

Contributing to the positive reputation are the president, leadership team, faculty, and staff of the college. The longevity of the faculty is seen as an important strength along with the experience of the college’s staff. Participants felt that the president represents Paul D. Camp Community college with a positive image and demonstrates a true passion for the college. One stakeholder session participant stated that there is “great leadership and faculty on all three campuses.”

Also contributing to the college’s good reputation are the relationships it has built over time. The college is viewed as having a strong tradition of partnering with the community and an ability to quickly meet a variety of constituents’ needs. It is viewed as an organization that strives to align itself with the needs of the community, i.e., base curricula on those needs. The college’s presence in Smithfield was viewed positively. In addition, participants mentioned that the college has done a great job in getting funding (e.g., grants) and hope that the college will “keep it up!”

Student Focus

Participants in SWOT sessions felt that the one-on-one attention given to students is a key strength of the college along with small class sizes that are seen as a plus for the educational process. Services for students, such as counseling for transfer to four-year colleges and those offered by the Admissions Office, are also viewed as a strong part of the college’s focus on students. The campus locations and website also provide good access for students.

Academic Programs

Specific academic programs were highlighted by participants as strengths. These include health care programs (e.g., the nursing program, which is the only one in the area), dual enrollment classes, and technical programs. Participants expressed appreciation for the college’s ability to quickly define and meet specific educational needs and to fund programs to fulfill the needs with grants.

The college is also viewed as offering several other benefits to students, including the following:

- An affordable education with low tuition and financial aid for post-secondary students that can result in debt-free students
- An increase in student activities and campus life
- Good technology services

- Upward Bound and student support services
- Guaranteed transfer of credits to a Virginia four-year school
- The ability of students to earn an associate's degree in high school and, while taking college classes, benefit from the same campus privileges as post-secondary community college students (e.g., library privileges)

Workforce Development Services

Session participants were pleased with the college's multi-purpose Regional Workforce Development Center in Franklin and view it as a hub for community activities. Some expressed appreciation that state-supported workforce services are driven through the community colleges and not through four-year schools.

Participants saw the following services as very beneficial:

- Rapid Response program for business closures
- Programs for individuals laid-off from local companies (e.g., résumé-writing and job interview skills; development of new job skills)

Participants appreciate Paul D. Camp Community College's ability to quickly define and meet specific workforce development needs and fund programs to fulfill the needs with grants. They offered their compliments to the workforce development staff for their recruitment and training work and suggest that this part of the college continue to receive strong support.

External Opportunities

College stakeholders, faculty, and staff were asked to provide their ideas for opportunities that may be important for the college to pursue over the next few years as part of the college's strategic plan. The two opportunities most frequently mentioned related to marketing and specific education and training programs. In addition, several ideas were presented about engaging the community.

Marketing

Session participants felt that the college needs to be more visible in public schools and in the community and to improve communications about the choices it offers to students. They felt that increased awareness would position the college to compete better with for-profit educational institutions and neighboring community colleges. A specific suggestion was to continue to be aggressive in marketing.

Many marketing strategies were offered for consideration, including the following:

- Using more advertisements (e.g., billboards, television, job fairs)
- Securing more publicity to convey the college's story and demonstrate the value of the college
- Using social media
- Hosting more public events to draw the community to all of the college's locations
- Emphasizing the guaranteed transfer to a four-year college or university
- Demonstrating the benefits of dual enrollment to parents
- Targeting specific audiences such as corporations, working class people, people interested in skilled trades, veterans, and those who may be learning disabled (and considered underserved)
- Starting recruitment in K-12 schools in the eighth grade; hiring a full-time recruiter
- Communicating the financial advantage of attending a community college
- Leveraging the current national focus on community colleges
- Providing statistics to potential students about the ability of students to get jobs in their chosen professions after graduation (e.g., high employment success rates in nursing and welding)
- Offering a more well-rounded college experience, similar to four-year institutions, to attract more students
- Ensuring the effective use of adult and high school career coaches

Education and Training Programs

Many ideas were presented about current and potential educational and training programs and related services offered by the college. Vocational programs that can lead directly to employment were frequently identified as a need in the community. Specifically mentioned were automotive maintenance, the current welding certificate, and mechanics. Session participants saw a benefit in the community college providing a path for high school career and technical education students (e.g., future plumbers) to continue their learning and obtain certifications or other credentials. Another option offered for consideration is an exam preparation class for CDL (commercial driver's license) students.

Programs aimed at high school students were also suggested, including involving more students in dual enrollment and working with high schools to reach students who are "in the middle" and lack special programs that are available to students with high academic results and to those who are struggling. A

benefit was also seen in working with local public schools and parents to better prepare students for college and the workplace.

Session participants felt the college's nursing program should be expanded and new programs developed for other health care professions. Programs for information technology professions were seen as important and a suggestion was made to create a cutting-edge signature program.

To benefit the community at large and the business community, several additional education and training program ideas were presented, including the following:

- Broadening education for inmates to help them prepare for successful reintegration to the community
- Offering a career readiness exam for people preparing to go into the workforce instead of continuing their education beyond high school
- Leveraging opportunities to retrain and retool displaced workers
- Helping returning students with study schools
- Offering a GED program or external diploma
- Offering training to employees of new businesses and continuing to be at the table for economic development opportunities
- Providing technology training to businesses in the areas of online retail, general use of technology (e.g., electronic health records), how to compete for customers in a technology-driven age (e.g., how to use Groupon), and related topics
- Providing services to businesses, perhaps through information technology students, to set up websites or get connected to social media
- Training the workforce on computer applications
- Offering classes to recertify educators
- Expanding the nursing program and adding other health care programs (PPA, Physical Therapy Assistant.)
- Offering adult education (e.g., Community Scholars Program, accounting, beginning computer, scratch cooking working with a local organization that has a commercial kitchen)
- Continuing the Blackwater/Nottoway Riverkeeper Program
- Law enforcement training

To facilitate success with current and proposed programs, faculty and staff suggested the college explore ways to use technology better and to embrace new technology. They also saw a benefit in hiring additional, competent adjuncts as full-time staff.

Engaging the Community

Session participants saw value in securing the assistance of advocates from the community to help create excitement about the college and to provide assistance with funding the college. They suggested using the college as a hub for community engagement (e.g., current movie nights) and creating and leveraging partnerships in the community and with businesses outside of the area for several reasons, including the following:

- To offer additional internships and co-ops

- To create a stronger connection with high school career and technical education departments
- To find ways to address transportation and child care issues that prohibit some individuals from attending college classes

For Smithfield, suggestions were to give the facility more of a campus feel and to develop a plan with the YMCA that takes advantage of the many things both organizations have to offer. Creating organizations for young people was offered as a way to gather ideas from this segment of society. At one of the stakeholder suggestions, a participant observed, "There is merit in keeping a group like this one together."

External Challenges (Threats)

People attending the faculty/staff and stakeholder sessions were asked for their perspectives on factors external to Paul D. Camp Community College that could have a detrimental impact on the college, if not anticipated and addressed. Four themes emerged: lack of awareness of Paul D. Camp Community College, challenges faced by students, Paul D. Camp Community College facilities, and academic issues.

Lack of Awareness of Paul D. Camp Community College

Participants in all sessions considered a lack of knowledge about Paul D. Camp Community College within the community as the college's greatest threat. Additional concerns were expressed about competition for the college. These concerns are similar to the opportunities previously presented.

Specific concerns were expressed about inadequate advertisement to promote the college and a general lack of awareness of the college's facility in Smithfield. If people do not know about opportunities, a barrier is created. A strong message provided by participants was to enhance marketing to create broader awareness. They felt that young people need exposure to careers and educational opportunities through the right media.

Another issue expressed by participants was the image of the college. For example, one participant felt that a myth exists that the college is not preparing students for success. Others felt that potential students avoid the college because it is where their parents went to school. Thus, there is a need to show potential students that Paul D. Camp Community College is "not your father's/mother's school." Effective marketing was seen as an avenue to create a stronger brand image in the community.

Concerns were also expressed about competition. People believe the college needs to understand why potential students from the area go to Tidewater Community College or Thomas Nelson Community College rather than Paul D. Camp Community College. There is increased competition from larger colleges (at a greater cost to students), from private schools such as ECPI, from distance learning opportunities, and from free, online courses from top line professors (i.e., massive open online courses – MOOC). Paul D. Camp Community College should leverage its cost advantage as part of its marketing plan to gain an advantage over the competition.

Participants wondered how the community could be more engaged in "getting the word out" about Paul D. Camp Community College and how the college could get more people to use its facilities, thus creating more awareness. Participants felt that community leaders could potentially be more involved in promoting the college.

Challenges for Students

Three factors were seen as presenting challenges for current or potential students: academic or work readiness, transportation, and the cost of education. These, in turn, present challenges for the college.

READINESS: Many participants expressed concerns that too many young people are not ready for work or college upon completion of high school. They saw this as a problem going back to early childhood as evidenced by children entering kindergarten unprepared. They feel strongly that the community needs a generation of young people who can be successful. And, they stressed that it is important to "invest in the high chair, not the electric chair."

Business people encounter job applicants who lack an appropriate work ethic or common sense (e.g., wearing pajamas to fill out a job application, not arriving to work on time). Organizations struggle to find job applicants who possess basic qualifications (e.g., diploma or GED). Programs such as Career Services, Inc. and Opportunity, Inc. have trouble finding participants, even though they pay students to work. Some individuals entering the job market have unrealistic salary expectations for the job and for their skills.

Participants shared their ideas about the possible causes of these problems: apathy, family values, young parents who may not have the skills to help their children succeed, and a system that allows people to not work being too strong.

Faculty members expressed similar concerns. They encounter students who are not prepared for college-level academics and view developmental classes as a barrier. Students enroll in online classes, but lack the computer skills to succeed. Faculty and staff also noted that there has been a rise in the number of single mothers who are not continuing their education due to babysitting issues or financial constraints. They may not be finishing high school and are not ready to go to college. Faculty felt that there must be a stronger emphasis on preparedness for college and that young people need additional motivation.

TRANSPORTATION: Fluctuating gas prices and inadequate mass transit were seen as challenges for students and potential students. Many high school students do not have cars and, as a result, cannot find an easy way to get to work or take classes at the college. For example, the lack of public transportation in the area makes it difficult for Suffolk people to get to Franklin for classes.

EDUCATION COSTS: Some participants expressed concerns about how to make education possible for those who cannot afford it. They feel it is important to hold down tuition costs so that a community college education does not get too expensive.

Paul D. Camp Community College Facilities

Participants questioned whether the college's workforce center and Suffolk campus are ideally located. They felt that the Suffolk Campus location is not ideal because it is not near Suffolk's population center. In addition, they wondered if the workforce center currently in Franklin would be better located in Suffolk because of the population growth in that area. Some questions whether Suffolk should be a "center" and not a full "campus." Concerns were expressed that there is virtually no way to expand the Smithfield facility. This may require the implementation of creative alternatives to bring the college's curriculum to its future students. Many noted the effects of technology on classrooms, distance learning, hybrid delivery methods, and the changing nature of traditional library services and spaces.

Faculty and staff expressed concerns about people who are not students using the college's facilities as places to "hang out." This may create a potential security issue. In addition, it was suggested that upgrades to some classrooms and offices would create a better academic and work environment.

Academic Challenges

Participants in the SWOT sessions stated that people need to get the right kind of education. However, participants perceived that the public school system may have issues with accreditation and may be struggling with standardized testing or maintaining academics (e.g., teaching a student to write a proper report). A recommendation was made for the college to continue to partner with local schools on this

issue and take the partnership to another level. Other concerns expressed were the perception that high school students are still being pushed toward college when some may prefer and be more successful pursuing an industrial education or a skilled trade.

Issues regarding faculty availability also arose among session participants. A suggestion was made to run law enforcement training from the college, but participants were unsure whether there would be enough instructors in the community to support this type of program. Health care teachers are also difficult to find and a requirement for high school teachers to be qualified as college teachers in order to teach dual enrollment sometimes creates a barrier.

Internal Weaknesses and Improvement Ideas

A SWOT analysis uses the term “weakness” to represent things the college could do better. Session participants were asked to identify internal weaknesses or offer ideas for improvement.

Opportunities exist to enhance internal college operations through more teamwork, stronger internal communication, and an emphasis on internal customer service. In addition, the college should explore ways to improve business processes and enhance current approaches for recognizing and rewarding good performance. Morale is a concern, due primarily to a four-year moratorium on salary increases across state government. As a result, compensation for staff was seen as non-competitive. Staffing is another concern with some individuals suggesting that there are too many part-time employees and not enough full-time staff and faculty. The number of people available to sponsor clubs and activities is viewed as limited.

There was also a concern expressed about ensuring that faculty members remain current in their fields so that they can properly prepare students for employment. They stressed the importance of faculty not becoming complacent. Meeting the professional development needs of the staff was viewed as important by stakeholders as well. A suggestion from a stakeholder session was to provide housing for faculty who travel to attract the instructors the college needs.

Stakeholders offering perspectives on weaknesses or ideas for improvement spoke at length about the need for marketing to “get the word out” about the college. Proposed marketing strategies were incorporated in the *Opportunities* section of this report. Stakeholders also cautioned that the college should not try to become all things to all people. Instead, it should focus on its mission and do it well. One participant saw three roles for the college: 1) offering two-year degrees, 2) providing training for trades, and 3) serving as a resource to industries that are growing and developing. The individual suggested that there should be as much emphasis on the second and third roles as is currently placed on the first role.

Improvement suggestions were proposed for child development classes; for example, a program called *Educational Partners* for teachers and parents on basic skills and children’s needs such as teaching children nursery rhymes. An expansion of parent training was also suggested for topics such as how to deal with the angry child or with children on medications.

Participants in the stakeholder sessions also shared their perspectives on the college’s role and its relationships with various entities. They view the college’s relationship with the school system as good, although it could be strengthened. They saw a need for more collaboration with government and community leaders and increased interaction with industries. They also suggested that the college define its role in helping businesses understand the current generation that will be entering the workplace.

To better support the business community, stakeholders offered several suggestions:

- Find out what the business managers are missing in terms of their business knowledge and skills.
- Offer an additional level of business manager development (beyond Entrepreneur Express).
- Seek partnerships with Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce to educate and prepare business managers.

- Identify the needs of various industries and then offer tailor-made programs for developing existing employees in those industries.
- Have instructors go on site at companies to teach.
- Partner career coaches with business incubators.
- Implement the college's Career Development Center plan at all three locations.