



OAKLAND
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOCUS GROUP REPORT



**Prepared for:
College Planning Council**

Prepared by
Tammy Tollon
Mark Woods
Stephanie Wren
Research Analysts
Office of Institutional Research
(248) 232-4528

March 2008

Oakland Community College
Strategic Planning Focus Groups Report
Winter 2008

Table Of Contents

Purpose..... 3

Methodology..... 3

Results 4

Goal 1: Curriculum 5

Goal 2: Student Success Skills..... 5

Goal 3: Student Engagement 5

Goal 4: External Relationships 6

Goal 5: Image and Communication 6

Goal 6: Human, Financial, Physical, and Social Capital..... 6

Goal 7: Relevance/Sustainability 7

Goal 8: Continuous Improvement..... 7

Conclusion: Recurring Themes..... 7

**Oakland Community College
Strategic Planning Focus Groups Report
Winter 2008**

Purpose

Focus groups were convened to gather input from the students regarding the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan.

Methodology

Members of the Instant Feedback Student Panel were recruited to participate in the discussions. A \$30 OCC bookstore gift certificate was the incentive. Two sessions were held in the lobby of the M-TEC building on the Auburn Hills Campus on March 6, 2008. A total of 20 students (a 50% response rate) were in attendance and all campuses were represented. Participants were asked to offer their opinions and/or feedback about each goal. Additionally, they were asked to rate each goal as either:

- Positive perspective
- Neutral perspective
- Negative perspective

The intent of the rating is to obtain an opinion of the goal as it is stated. The students' commentary may not necessarily reflect their rating of the goal. Also, it should be noted that focus group results are qualitative in nature. So, quantitative data such as counts, frequencies, or percentage are not evaluated. The primary purpose of focus groups is to garner feedback from an audience regarding their thoughts, opinions, or impressions of a particular topic.



Results



**Oakland Community College
Strategic Planning Focus Groups Report
Winter 2008**

Results: Strategic Planning Goals

Goal 1: Curriculum

Participants' perspective of this goal was overwhelmingly positive. The following comments were provided:

- *“With more employers looking for oral and written communication skills, increased emphasis must be placed here”*
- *“We need to put more emphasis from the start on basic skills including written communication which is critical to success in any field.”*
- *“Great goal... Will help the students later.”*

Goal 2: Student Success Skills

Participants' perspective was mixed regarding this goal. The following comments were provided:

- *“We need to make students more aware of college programs or facilities which can facilitate students' success such as tutoring, supplemental instruction sessions, ASC labs.”*
- *“Sounds like extra stress on the student.”*
- *“Supplemental instruction sessions are very helpful.”*

Goal 3: Student Engagement

The participants' perspective was overwhelmingly positive regarding the student engagement goal.

- *“I wish that the student life activities were at all of the campuses and not just some.”*
- *“I would participate in student sports teams if there were more.”*
- *“Student life activities should be structured to both day and evening students. So much is done in the day while I am in class and I miss it. I would love to be able to participate more.”*
- *“How will you engage the students to support the activities?”*

**Oakland Community College
Strategic Planning Focus Groups Report
Winter 2008**

Results: Strategic Planning Goals

Goal 4: External Relationships

Again, the student perspective of this goal was positive. It garnered a great deal of discussion with respect to its benefit to the students as they advance through their careers.

- *"I like the 'early college' initiative. How do you plan to develop broader global connections?"*
- *"Good goal but how will it happen? Will OCC help get student jobs in the area they are studying?"*
- *"Currently, OCC has a collaboration program with LTU in the architecture department. This was a major factor in my decision towards enrolling at OCC."*

Goal 5: Image and Communication

Along with an overall positive perspective of this goal, one student noted that successful external relationships (Goal 4) are contingent upon a good image and effective communication skills.

- *"We definitely need this."*
- *"How do you plan to achieve this?"*
- *"The better image we develop the more marketable this school and degree will become."*
- *"Sounds good."*
- *"How would this be implemented?"*

Goal 6: Human, Financial, Physical, and Social Capital

The perspectives of this goal were mixed.

- *"Too vague."*
- *"Too broad."*
- *"Using what resources?"*
- *"Can this be done with the existing tax base in Oakland County? I don't mind an additional tax for OCC if I have assurance that it is being used appropriately."*
- *"Hopefully this will lead to more financial aid."*
- *"If able to, this will keep costs down."*

**Oakland Community College
Strategic Planning Focus Groups Report
Winter 2008**

Results: Strategic Planning Goals

Goal 7: Relevance/Sustainability

Students' perspectives in regards to this goal were mixed.

- *"It is a great idea. I would like to see a detailed plan."*
- *"What steps will we take to become a 'greener' school?"*
- *"What is the college's philosophy of sustainability? Who will monitor this goal?"*
- *"Fine, as long as it does not compromise curriculum."*

Goal 8: Continuous Improvement

The participants' perspectives were positive regarding this goal.

- *"Are these assessments to be done by an independent agency or within the school?"*
- *"Knowing that OCC is willing to make an effort to strive for excellence along with other institutions is a great goal to me."*
- *"OK goal, but how or will it put more stress on students and teachers?"*
- *"What standards will we use to determine if we are successful? There should be concrete repeatable ways to measure and document the success or lack there of."*

Conclusion: Recurring Themes

Both groups provided primarily positive ratings for a majority of the goals. Yet, some of the written commentary was mixed. When queried about this dichotomy, the students indicated that their rating reflected their perception that the goals were theoretical while their commentary was of a practical nature.

Experiential learning opportunities were also a discussion point. By observation, younger students wanted to be made aware of the opportunities to plan their program of study and the courses they would take. Older students wanted to gain hands-on experience or on-the-job training to prepare them for their careers after they graduate.

Another theme was articulation agreements. One student indicated that his decision to enroll in OCC was contingent upon his ability to complete two years at OCC and finish his architecture degree at Lawrence Technological University. The student felt this type of program was more cost effective to him. Other students felt that they wanted to be and should have been more informed about which courses and/or programs would transfer to which institutions. They felt this knowledge would have allowed them to better prepare their curriculum.