

Focus Group with College of Marin Business/Industry Advisory Council Members 10/9/18 at Indian Valley Campus

11 members of COM CTE advisory councils attended. COM Mission & Values were posted on the big screen along with the following questions asked, in order of asking:

- In a quick phrase, what describes COM? What words or images occur to you when you think of this College?
- What does COM do well?
- What should COM improve?
- What new opportunities do you see that COM should engage in?

Results

Describe COM in a quick phrase

Extremely good value for \$

Cost effective educational opportunities

Community connected – especially with high schools

Partnerships – regionally connected

Valuable community resource

Workforce developer – a needed asset in Marin

Pathways – a place for students to start their educational journey

Feeder college

Higher education at a local level

Suburban campus for living at home

Community focused in a rural setting with occupational opportunities

Local, community driven, striving to provide variety of educational services

Continuing ed – many courses to choose from, diverse instructors

Basic classes, night classes are best for professionals because older more professional students

Adult education

Weird crossover (see Discussion below for more information)

Beautiful campus

Beautiful campus – Kentfield & IVC

Opportunities for all

Growing junior college

Trying to become best of the best

Interns (See Discussion below for more information)

Discussion

Businesses could use more interns from COM. Employers are not seeing COM students as potential long-term employees but as temporary helpers, and that should change. Define intern better as a job to grow in and not just a temporary step for skill building.

Marketing to businesses is lacking.

Weird cross-over in classes – classes seem to compete and there is a disconnect in the department re: business classes, e.g. landscape classes focused on architecture and not horticulture. Need better alignment of curriculum with job knowledge and skills.

Emphasize value. Children attending COM and getting a good education that would cost 11 times as much if they were attending a university. Asked how that can be done. Christina explained our Basic Aid status, funding from local property taxes. We are one of the few basic aid schools; there are only 6 now. The value of property is higher in Marin and ties in to this.

What does College of Marin do well?

Very cost effective

Affordability

Provide a quality education at a cost effective price

Good value for GE courses

Provide options for transfer and save money

Transfer programs – especially UC

Link to UC campuses

Outreach

Community relations

Respond to community needs

Community involvement, outreach

Reaching out to high school & Middle school students to take classes

Community involvement

Large amount of classes

Diverse types of classes

Workforce – breadth of curriculum

Provides training for career changing people

Whole community education and social classes

COMpass program

Has practical and field savvy instructors

Great educator involvement

teachers are good – Gina Cullen, Mike Cairns and Christine Li

Sustainable facilities and management, solar, storage

Greening facilities

Amazing scholarship program

Fast updates to curriculum to keep it relevant

Student portal & communication

What should COM improve?

Advertising tell more stories

Messaging about program

More outreach to local business for hiring students

Market to companies to improve hiring and perception

Need to educate the business community about COM current and future students & employees

Make links to employers explicit

What businesses hire COM students

Local job market enhancer

More training for work in the trades, blue collar jobs

More interns for all types of local businesses (short and long term) (See Discussion for more information)

Improve relevance within courses & cert programs

Number & availability of night courses for working people changing careers

Expand summer week, longer options for high school and college age

Basic Science, high achievement levels?

Campus as a living lab (See Discussion for more information)

More interaction and bridges b/w faculty & facilities

Faster response time (See Discussion for more information)

More innovative approaches

IVC is out of the way – better transportation

Public image of COM as mistake prone (i.e. bldg./facilities lawsuit)

Improve KTD parking

More high school connections

Need more lab space

Discussion

Campus as a living lab. There's a large separation between the actual student experience and sustainability experts on campus – a facilities and education disconnect. Students could learn from being involved in these operations. Giving students experience with resource reduction – economy and environment can also help with equity. Another respondent says COM is better than most other colleges, such as including Solar power in the summer academy.

More interaction bridging faculty and administration and facilities is needed.

Faster response time – e.g., teaching in partnership with Terra Linda, but takes 3 years to get it up and going, whereas another college responded in 3 months. Systems and processes gets in the way-- “a lot of red tape.” Respondent works with dozens of community colleges and says COM is slower.

Seems like COM's focus is heads down and there's so much staff and faculty busy work and no focus outward to actually get stuff done with the community.

No one speaks much about intern programs or possibilities outside of transferring once the 2-year program is completed. Need career and community outreach opportunities and more career options offered through counseling. Needs to be smart, fast and savvy.

Local job market enhancement –should know what the good jobs are and knowledge of labor market information all around. IVC would be a great campus for local job improvement, better training for local jobs.

There's some frustration about lack of support for basic science education to answer to jobs 10 years from now. Tension between preparing for jobs of today vs. a future forward basic education to support for all possibilities in the future. Curriculum driven largely by faculty. What is relevant curriculum? Undergoes a two-year review process – what is meeting the labor market needs? That's why the advisory meetings are so important to evaluate what's relative and what needs to change in curriculum.

Shaping curriculum for what local business needs in skills and education. But the jobs are needed in 6 months, but COM take 1 ½ years to bring the curriculum to the table. And the right instructors are needed. Possibility of reshaping current curriculum to help meet current conditions in order to get around long review and approval process with PGS and CO.

New Opportunities

Opportunities for small business & manufacturing & production in textiles (in small lots, such as sewing) is needed as well as art as a business.

A job board/job bank where students and employers can connect readily

Developing a really good pathway revolving around responding to climate crises (fires, floods, sea level rise) and sustainability (environmental and financial), internship program. Will be job growth.

Electrifying transportation, resources are being developed for a smart clean energy grid. This will require many specifically skilled employees, program for training this technicians, internship program to involve students in current projects happening on campus now. Field and job market that's just now developing. COM's ground heat pumps—student involvement with this would give them good marketable skills.

Clean energy, electrification is a huge emerging job market where students can help measure, maintain, build, budget and market. Businesses everywhere need it. Students could be doing this for the college.

Biotechnology through partnerships and lab space.

Links to hospitality career w/partnership for BA/BS degree.

Teacher credential with partner.

Expand college boundaries, such as lab space at a business facility. Get corporate sponsored labs on campus, summer academies.

Students want the hands-on experience that will enhance learning aside from reading. Institutionalize internship program—it fell apart when an employee was out.

More activities here at IVC, because awareness of this campus isn't really there. Summer movies on the lawn and activities like TedTalks at Kentfield will bring more traffic and awareness to IVC. Bank of Marin could use our campus for their 5K run. Partnership with Nugget Market is good. Marketing and outreach could be taken advantage of to strengthen partnerships with businesses. Makerspace lab was brought up as a great new opportunity, as was demonstration training kitchen.

Need marketing to the aging population for courses and donors. Dominican does a lot of marketing to this group.

Flexible scheduling, some classes are offered only during high school hours, so some high school students cannot take the classes. Survey the high school students to see what classes they would take and what availability is needed.

Telling the stories. Example—ground heat pumps exist at COM and are saving money. Get people interested. COM should have marketing videos readily available in Instagram and YouTube showing class projects and newest program or campus changes. The multi-media students could do this. Get business, marketing, and media students involved with running and marketing COM. Connection, relevance, community – a way to show their involvement and what they are a part of.

