On November 18, 2013, the College had a focus group meeting with a cross-section of the community. This group included all major stakeholder groups associated with the College. The focus group activity was held as a part of the College’s new strategic planning process to assist in determining future strategic initiatives of the College. The College sent out approximately 67 invitations and we had 27 attend. As a result of the response, we had to break the group into two separate focus groups. One group was facilitated by Dr. Gene Couch, Executive Vice President, and Scott Queen, Associate Dean of Business Technologies, served as the recorder. The second group was facilitated by Carolyn Rhode, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and Dr. Jessica Harrell, Coordinator of Research and Institutional Effectiveness, served as the recorder.

The following individuals from the community participated in the focus group:

- Jim Bryan, Fairystone Fabrics, Inc.
- John Currin, Alamance Regional Medical Center
- Eric Henry, T.S. Designs
- Reggie Lipscomb, Liggett Group
- Dr. Aaron P. Noble, Jr., City of Burlington
- Randy Perkins, Prime Personnel
- Renee Freeland, LabCorp
- Kirsten Pimanis, Tanger Outlets in Mebane
- Chris Reavis, National Agents Alliance
- Steve Whitfield, Whitfield Properties Team
- Mac Williams, Alamance County Chamber of Commerce
- Phil Bowers, Sustainable Alamance
- Roy Dawson, 2009 ACC Graduate
- April Durr, Healthy Alamance
- Oscar Garcia, Centro La Comunidad
- Tracy Grayzer, Alamance Regional Medical Center
- Robyn Hadley, Alamance-Burlington School System
- Pastor Ron Harris, Piedmont Men of Steel
- Jeremy Ireland, Centro La Comunidad
- Ida Kidd, Western Alamance High School
- Tom Manning, County Commissioner
- Glenda Morrow, Goodwill Industries Community Resource Center
- Heidi Norwich, United Way
- Susan Osborne, Alamance County Department of Social Services
- Susan Welborn, Parent of homeschooled children
- Robin Wintringham, Habitat for Humanity
The community group was presented with the following categories to facilitate and organize the discussions:

- Community Outreach
- Facilities
- Programming (Curriculum and Continuing Education)
- Student Services
- Technology
- Fiscal Resources
- Accreditation
- Overall Quality
- Other

The community group generated a number of ideas and the list of ideas is presented below in its entirety. The group used a nominal group technique to further refine the initiatives. As a result of this process, the following ideas were identified by the community as the most important to the College:

- Pursue opportunities for Latino students to attend College at reasonable rates
- Consider adding more vocational programs in Continuing Education area such as training for trades programs – i.e. pipefitting, plumbing, and concrete finishing
- Do a better job of telling the ACC story with a focus on success stories
- Consider placing advanced Applied Technology Center in a current building in the community
- Consider adding more courses at sites throughout the community

This information will be used in the development of the College’s new strategic plan.

FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

Community Outreach

- Increase visibility
- Classes at community centers/businesses
- More events/festivals on campus
- Communicate value of education to individuals and community
- Forums to discuss and inform about community issues
- Increased presence in area schools/partnerships (public/charter)
- Increase marketing efforts
  - Reconnect with community
  - Specific career paths
- Speakers – public/charter schools
- Partnerships with sister institutions
- Promote career technical programs
- Participate in Community Assessment (2) conducted by United Way
- Ability to offer free classes to seniors
- ACC to develop partnerships with churches, schools, etc. in under-utilized neighborhoods (4)
- More publicity / explanation for CCP for parents, students, high schools and four year universities (ECU gets it, but others do not) (1)
- More support for seasoned (40s and 50s) workers returning to college after a layoff (1)
Opportunities for Latino students (undocumented, deferred access) to attend at reasonable rates (7)
More outreach to Latino community through churches, Centro La Communidad, etc. Need materials in Spanish (2)
More structured data sharing with ABSS
Telling our story regarding successes (4)
Endorsing Vision for Public Education document (1)
Dr. Gatewood participating in Education Cabinet at Chamber
ACC faculty more visible in high schools, middle schools – going into classes and talking about opportunities at ACC (1)
Get people from community on campus more frequently so they see what you have to offer
Letting communities know what programs/services we offer (3)
More outreach to parents (not your mama’s ACC) It’s better than before. Not a second choice. (3)
Targeted marketing/data sharing with ABSS for students who at one point indicate an interest in attending ACC (1)
Sharing needs of our students with internal and external community

Facilities

Expand/update aging facilities (automotive)
Sharing Career and Technical Center with ABSS and smoother transition from CTC to ACC (3)

Programming (Curriculum and Continuing Education)

Retraining of displaced workers ex. medical coding/billing
Local food
Renewable energy
Co-op, internships (Mechanical, HVAC)
Mechatronics (electronics, electrical engineering)
Programming/Software Engineering (computer science)
Aviation
Logistics/Distribution
STEM - Critical Thinking
Soft skills
Online programs
Condense evening program time to completion
More certificate options (skill-specific)
Specialty culinary courses – Continuing Education
More courses at sites throughout the community (4)
Science, writing prep for transfer students (3)
Support for college readiness with new GPA qualification (1)
Provide students with more internships, clinical settings (Elon is doing it, why isn’t ACC??) (2)
Provide flexible programming with marketable skills (e.g., partner with Honda Aero) (3)
More vocational programs, training of trades programs (pipefitting, plumbing, concrete finishing)—Con. Ed. (5)
Student Services

- Focus on customer service
- Athletics
- College should indicate support for / need for public transportation in the county (5)
- Better promotion of ACC’s services for students – food bank, counseling services, services for those with learning disabilities etc. (1)
- Partnerships with health agencies/initiatives (smoking cessation, Eat Less/Move More, reduction in alcohol, substance abuse) (3)
- Support for special populations and the staff that interacts with those populations (6)
- Grant $$ available for middle school and other grades summer enrichment programs; e.g. currently ABSS paying private provider for SAT/ACT prep courses which they would prefer to offer through ACC (2)

Technology

Fiscal Resources

- More responsibility on raising funds (endowments, grants)

Accreditation

Overall Quality

NOTE: The numbers at the end of certain items represent the number of votes allocated to that item by the participants of the focus group.