On November 22, 2013, the College held a focus group meeting with the President’s Cabinet (senior leadership). This focus group activity was held as part of the College’s new strategic planning process to determine future strategic initiatives of the College. The meeting was facilitated by Scott Queen, Associate Dean of Business Technologies, and Dr. Jessica Harrell, Coordinator of Research and Institutional Effectiveness, served as the recorder.

The following Cabinet members participated in the focus group:

- Dr. Algie Gatewood, President
- Dr. Gene Couch, Executive Vice President
- Mark Newsome, Vice President for Administrative and Fiscal Services
- Carolyn Rhode, Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Jeff Bright, Assistant to the President
- Ed Williams, Director of Public Information and Marketing

The President’s Cabinet 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 President’s Cabinet generated a number of ideas and the list is present in its entirety below. The Cabinet members then used a nominal group technique to further refine our focus group going forward. As a result of this refinement, the following ideas were identified by the President’s Cabinet as the most important to the College.

- Explore new opportunities for new program offerings (curriculum and continuing education) using a new comprehensive assessment model.
- Identify the appropriate balance between student access and student success.
- Update the College’s facilities master plan.
- Devote adequate resources (both financial and human) to the area of technology.

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

Community Outreach
- Lunch meeting with all retirees
- Speaking engagements with President throughout the county
- Create a Board of Visitors
- Bimonthly parent nights (for parents of high school students) (2)
- Create a committee process for new programming
- Expand links/relationships with faith-based communities
- Provide better info to elected officials so our needs are better understood (1)
- Establish closer working relationships with elected officials (1)
- Host annual legislative breakfast
- Standard presentation for the college – multiple versions (1)
- Walking trail in grass field open to community
- Build partnerships with other community college, community groups (1)
- Target groups for outreach strategically

Facilities
- Explore opportunities for new space, especially for industrial programs
- Update facilities master plan (3)
- Reevaluate space utilization
- Better common areas for students
- Make-over for auditorium
- Larger community meeting space at ACC
  - Explore public-private partnership
  - Explore other locations
  - Explore urban renewal development (impact Burlington)
- Public transportation/work with city (1)
- Reexamine signs in front of campus
- Make campus more visible to I-40/85
- Billboard
- Reexamine food service
- Partner with New Leaf Society to improve interchange
- Decide what to do about bond
- Alternative location for horticulture/sound barriers
- Develop schedule for cleaning outside/exterior
- Re-do Boardroom

Programming (Curriculum and Continuing Education)
- Explore new opportunities for programming with community input (4)
- Reexamine how to improve existing programs
- Use advisory committees more strategically
- Examine possibility of articulation agreements with 4-year institutions (e.g. Elon)
- Explore partnership with Elon (programming, scholarships, etc.)
- Integrate Basic Skills and Developmental programs (1)
- Work with ABSS to bridge gap between high school and college-level work
- Focus programming on community needs (current high school students, adults)
• Reexamine Literacy building name
• Move forward with an honors program
• International education opportunities

Student Services
• Address customer service issues (1)
• Create processes that are more user-friendly to avoid “runaround” (1)
• Expand Career Services staff
• Create partnerships with health agencies for programs for students (e.g. anti-smoking, obesity, exercise, substance abuse prevention)
• Find appropriate balance between access and retention success (3)

Technology
• Devote adequate resources – financial, human (3)
• Complete technology deployment for technology-rich classrooms (1)
• Increase resources and mobility for senior staff
• Technology plan for updating computers, etc.
• Reevaluate/repurpose technology committee

Fiscal Resources
• Reevaluate organizational structure and job responsibilities, including salary plan (4)
• Increase/explore new revenue streams (1)
  o Federal and private grants
  o Private-public partnerships
• Develop process to discern allocation of resources for departments
• Fully document policies and procedures

Accreditation
• Pursue programmatic accreditations (e.g. Early Childhood)
• Build IE capacity
• Reexamine IE structure

Overall Quality
• Balance activities with human resources
• Reexamine professional development plan to include outside experts to increase knowledge for the college (1)
• Be open to new student success models for orientation, advising, etc.
• Identify institutional priorities (1)
• Focus on teamwork, open communication
• Find a way to safeguard institutional memory
• Leadership development program

Other
• Reexamine Commencement model
• Reexamine classroom schedule, course schedule, class hour, semester calendar
• Be more cognizant of return on investment (1)
• More partnerships with other community colleges
- Better promotion of who we are, what we do, services we provide - especially high tech skills (2)

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.