As part of the strategic planning process, Alamance Community College surveyed several constituencies related to the College and its work for input regarding the College’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The groups surveyed were the faculty, staff, administrators, the Board of Trustees, a selected group of alumni, selected representatives of the community, and a select group from the Chamber of Commerce. These surveys provided a wealth of information. However, several definitive emphases emerged across the various constituencies.

1) **Personnel:** All groups noted the quality of the faculty and staff of the College as a strength of the College; especially the sense of friendliness and commitment to service. It was clear, however, that this was not always the case as several of the alumni noted failures in the quality of instruction and the responsiveness of faculty and staff to concerns. While the preponderance of the responses pointed to personnel as a strength, these isolated reports should also be noted. The surveys also revealed a concern that upcoming retirements and budget constraints could be threats to the hiring and maintaining of quality faculty and staff. Concerns were also expressed that the size of the staff may not be in keeping with the expansion of the faculty over the past few years.

2) **Academics:** The surveys indicated a general satisfaction with the quality of the educational experience at the College. Several current programs were singled out as examples of success (University Transfer, Culinary, Horticulture, etc.) However, concerns were expressed that some current programs were no longer matching the needs of the community and that the information provided in some programs is outdated and not adequately preparing students for those fields. Respondents indicated a concern for lack of new programs better matching the needs of the current community and economic environment. Additionally, respondents pointed to the flexibility of course offerings as a strength of the College while others pointed to a need to offer more flexibility (more online offerings, expansion of night and Saturday programs).

3) **Community:** The surveys provided a mixed response in regards to the College’s relationships with the community, with organizations, and other institutions. Several pointed to a good reputation in the community, a history of community involvement, and good working relationships with local companies. Yet, it was clear that many saw a need for the College and its leadership to be more engaged in the community and to have partnerships with local organizations and institutions. There were also suggestions for more partnerships with other educational institutions (colleges, ABSS, etc.). Concerns were expressed that the College needs to devote more time and resources to advertising, branding, and getting information to the community about its work and the advantages of the College.
4) **Physical Plant and Technology:** Many pointed to the location of the main campus as a strength for the College—both in terms of being on the interstate but also its geographic location as related to the larger region. Many spoke of the advantages of small class sizes and the closeness of the campus. However, parking was a repeated concern along with some respondents indicating that lack of public transit may be hindering some students from completing their education. Security concerns were also expressed as well as lack of codes of conduct and dress for students. The biggest concern in regards to infrastructure was that the technology on the campus was not current with the times and economy. This concern was expressed in terms of teaching technologies, computers, internet technologies, administrative technology, and the actual technology related to some of the trade programs. In another area of concern, several respondents expressed criticism of the bookstore and food services.

5) **Monetary Issues:** It was clear that many believed the affordability of the education available at the College was a clear strength for the school. However, concerns were expressed about how the ongoing increases in tuition were affecting student ability to continue their education. The inability of students to pay for their education was pointed to as a difficulty in student retention. Suggestions were made regarding payment plans and participation in the student loan program. Budget constraints were regularly identified as a weakness and as a threat to the College in maintaining qualified employees and in acquiring the needed improvements in technology.

6) **Competition:** It was noted by many of the respondents that ACC is in a competitive atmosphere with our neighboring sister community colleges, schools offering online courses, and the proprietary schools. There seemed to be a suggestion that the College needed to be doing a better job positioning itself to be competitive in this marketplace educational environment.

Summary: The surveys give the overall impression that the College is doing a good job and that it has many strengths upon which to build. However, there does appear to be a strong sense that the College is in need of a thorough review of all programming and procedures to better position itself to address the needs of the community and to be competitive. The opportunity suggested is that the College updates itself and its programming in order to do a better job in the future while building on the strengths of its tradition. There is a sense that the school has become stagnant and has not looked outward to the community and to other institutions and resources as it should in order to fulfill its role as a leader in the community and economy of Alamance County. The strengths are there however for the College to fulfill its potential.