Funding Plan: Core College

Emily Lane

Department of Higher Education, The Penn State University

HIED 810: Planning and Resource Management

Dr. James Trainer

April 25, 2021

Core College Funding Plan

Core College has recently undergone a program prioritization process based on Dickeson's (2010) methodology with the intention to phase out or consolidate some programs to allow for growth in other areas. The prioritization process was conducted in response to fluctuating enrollment rates and an external consultant's report which suggested that faculty and other resources were not being optimally utilized. It is worth noting that despite an overall positive change in enrollment over the six-year time period being evaluated, there have been noticeable enrollment trends within certain degrees and programs. Additionally, Core College's fall full-time enrollment is more sensitive to yearly changes than its regional peers. All of Core College's programs have been evaluated based on Dickeson's (2010) criteria for disinvestment, maintenance, or investment to strategically reallocate resources and ensure program offerings reflect student interest, market demand, and institutional mission.

The prioritization process identified 13 programs to invest in (Baccalaureate Programs: Business, Criminal Justice BS, Electromech Engineering, Food Services, Hotel Management, Mathematics, Nursing-RN to BS, Nursing BS, and Psychology and Associate program: Nursing), 5 programs to maintain with caution (Baccalaureate Programs: English and Environmental Studies, Associate Programs: Electric Engineering Tech, Mech Engineering Tech, and Family Studies), and 3 programs to disinvest resources from (Associates Programs: Organizational Leadership, Railroad Technology, Other*). This plan aims to link long-term strategic planning to the College's operating budgeting strategy. Decision makers, in this case the program prioritization committee, must be acutely aware of the institution's goals to do so successfully (Bottorf, 2011).

Funding Sources

Faculty and Staff Hiring and Reassignment

Human capital is a vital institutional resource that must be strategically utilized to invest in and support growing programs. Of the 13 programs to be invested in, 6 have rapidly grown in the past six years. Of these 6 programs, 4 (Associates of Nursing, Baccalaureate of Electromech Engineering, Food Services, and Nursing BS) also have a high population of students enrolled. These programs have

sufficient enrollment, future growth potential, and align with the career-oriented focus central to Core College's mission. Therefore, additional faculty hires are justified to invest in the human capital of the program and continue meeting student interests. Likely, faculty for the Nursing BS and the Associates of Nursing will have some course overlap, so their skills can be utilized to grow two programs at once. Although hiring new faculty will be costly initially, the rapid growth and high enrollment will likely continue, so more students can be accepted into the programs and increase revenue to cover initial expenditures.

The Associate Degree in Organizational Leadership as well as the Associate Degree in Railroad Technology are programs that will be disinvested. Faculty and staff supporting these programs should be given the opportunity to be reassigned to support the Baccalaureate Food Services, Hotel Management, or Electromechanical Engineering programs as it is likely there is similar expertise required within these areas. Also, students currently enrolled will naturally be grandfathered into these programs, allowing sufficient time for any faculty who are unable to find appropriate reassignment enough time to begin looking towards the future. It is important for institutions to support their current faculty and staff through providing opportunities for internal movement rather than only having the option of eliminating their position.

Program Consolidation and Elimination

Programs that have been assigned to be disinvested in will be initially scaled back by not accepting new applicants with the intention of eliminating them completely within 4 years. Each program assigned to be disinvested in is an associate degree program, so 4 years should be ample time for current students to graduate from the program without disrupting their course of study. Programs that have been categorized as "maintain with caution" should be given a one year grace period to undergo further evaluations regarding percent growth and enrollment. After this, if the programs have not seen an increase in these categories, they should be consolidated with similar, more successful programs. If, on the other hand, a program sees substantial decrease in percent growth or enrollment, they should become candidates for program elimination. Again, associate degree programs should be given 4 years before

elimination, while baccalaureate degree programs should be given 6 years before elimination so the current students' course of study is not affected.

Physical Space and Facilities

A program must have space to grow, so classrooms from eliminated programs should be updated to include appropriate technological and structural necessities to support Electromechanical Engineering and Nursing students. These two programs are not only growing rapidly, but also likely require specialized labs or instructional areas so students can practice the hands-on skills required in their degrees. This additional space can be repurposed initially to support lectures while the technology can be updated gradually over several years.

Increased Revenue

Finally, effective and comprehensive student recruitment efforts should be prioritized to support the projected growth of enrollment of programs the college is investing in. Student retention and persistance to graduation should also be prioritized, especially for students in programs the college is aiming to grow. New student enrollment should bring some tuition revenue that can then be reinvested in the programs they are joining.

External constituents such as Federal and State governing bodies should also be petitioned to receive additional appropriations to improve technological infrastructure. Many of the programs to be prioritized support nursing, engineering, or hospitality career preparation. It is likely that there are appropriations that support this type of program. Furthermore, alumnae of the growing programs should also be contacted with the aim of receiving financial donations intended to increase the clout of their Alma Mater.

<div align="center">

Timeline for when changes will come to fruition

</div>

Physical classrooms should be tailored to fit their new program's needs and additional faculty should be hired and trained before the beginning of the Fall Semester. Although both hiring new faculty and staff and repurposing instructional facilities is initially costly, recruitment efforts should yield some increased revenue to alleviate the weight of these costs through providing additional funds that can be re-

allocated as needed. These recruitment and retention efforts should be a coordinated and comprehensive effort by all relevant faculty and staff. A 5-year plan should be established so recruitment efforts are optimized to reach potential students for several years before matriculation. Although the financial payoff will be small for the first few years of this initiative, it has the potential to be substantial after several years of concentrated effort. Finally, Associate degree programs should be consolidated or eliminated within four years, while baccalaureate degree programs should be consolidated or eliminated within six years.

<div align="center">**Programs Affected or Involved**</div>

Programs Affected

Prioritization efforts should be organized by the prioritization team but practically executed by the academic deans of the affected departments. Departments that will be consolidated should be notified early so arrangements can be made to share resources and scale back operations. It is imperative that all representatives of both the affected programs and involved programs are informed that the purpose of prioritization is to support the college as it pursues its mission. Additionally, it should be clear that program prioritization is a process supported by data and pre-determined criteria, and it will not arbitrarily eliminate programs or members of those programs.

Justification of Funding Choices

Each program's viability was evaluated to appropriately provide evidence to assist leadership in their decision to invest, maintain, or disinvest institutional resources. The framework assigned points to indicate the program's percent growth over six years, the number of students enrolled in Fall 2010, cost of the program per credit hour to the university, and potential access to shared resources through program overlap referred to in this report as "pairing". This framework identified several programs that had a relatively high cost to the university per student credit hour with relatively low enrollment and percent growth. Therefore, these programs should be consolidated or eliminated so resources can be re-allocated to support the advancement of Core College's strategic plan and institutional mission (Dooris & Rackofff, 2012).

Measures used to Monitor Success of the Plan

Measure Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rates

  The purpose of program prioritization is to strategically re-allocate resources to support increased enrollment, retention, and persistance to graduation in growing programs that align with student interest and institutional mission. Therefore, to measure the success or lack of success of resource re-allocation methods, we must measure student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Growth in these areas will indicate success of our plan, while a decrease will indicate that the plan needs to be reevaluated.

References

Bottorf, P. (2011. Academic resource and budget planning. Integrated resource and budget

     planning at colleges and universities.

Dickeson, R. (2010). Prioritizing academic programs and services: Reallocating resources to

     achieve strategic balance.

Dooris, M. & Rackoff, J. (2012). Institutional planning and resource management. Handbook for

     institutional research. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.