Final Strategic Planning Assignment: Core College

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Overall Evaluation of Core College

Enrollment Trends

A comparison of 2000-2010 Historical Fall Official Enrollments including Full time Enrollments (FTEs) and Headcount at Core College reflects overall increase in enrollment. This matches the trends of four colleges in the region. Of those colleges, Core College is the only one to experience fluctuations in enrollment. Harris College, Able College, and Beckett College are fairly robust in their enrollment numbers, meaning they are not susceptible to large changes. Whereas the opposite is true regarding Core College's enrollment which is more sensitive to yearly changes. Slight changes are to be expected; however, Core College should make more calculated choices to avoid large fluctuations in yearly enrollment.

Degree Trends

Over the six-year time period being evaluated, despite an overall positive change, there have been noticeable enrollment trends within certain degrees and programs. The associate degree programs have seen an overall decrease in enrollment of about 23% with a relatively dramatic decrease between 2008 and 2009. Conversely, the baccalaureate degree programs have seen an overall increase of about 19% with a substantial increase in enrollment between 2008 and 2009. This dramatic change could be a result of the 2008 economic crisis.

Although most associate programs saw a decline, enrollment in the Associate Nursing degree program has been relatively stable with a slight increase in recent years. While most of the baccalaureate programs have shown relative stability, the Electromechanical Engineering and Nursing B.S. degree programs have shown significant growth in enrollment.

Takeaways

Core College's baccalaureate degree enrollment are growing, while the associate degree enrollment is declining. Professional preparation degree programs such as engineering and nursing should be Core College's priorities.

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Resource Reallocation Framework`

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Each program's viability must be evaluated to appropriately provide evidence to assist leadership in their decision to invest, maintain, or disinvest institutional resources. My proposed framework for evaluating each program involves assigning 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". Although there are several factors to consider, this framework could provide a starting point in prioritization process.

The percent change in growth is calculated by comparing the average program enrollment in Fall 09-10 versus the average program enrollment in Fall 05-06. If the percent change of enrollment in the program is greater than +15% the program is labeled as growing and is assigned 3 points. If the percent change of program enrollment is greater than or equal to -15% but less than or equal to +15%, the program is labeled as stable and is assigned 2 points. If the percent change of program enrollment is less than -15% the program is labeled as at risk and is assigned one point. It is worth noting that the 15% cutoff boundaries are arbitrarily chosen and could be adjusted.

The number of students enrolled in Fall 2010 is indicative of the current student interest levels. A program with 0 – 50 students will receive 1 "interest" point, one with 51 – 100 students will receive 2 points, one with 101 – 150 students will receive 3 points, and programs with more

than 151 students will receive 4 points. Based off this criterion, I think it is important for Core College to invest in programs with a large student enrollment.

A program's access to shared resources will be assigned points based on the program they are paired with. If program A, for example, shares resources with program B which is growing, program A will receive 3 pairing points. If program A shares resources with program C which is stable, program A will receive 2 pairing points. If program A shares resources with program D which is at risk, program A will receive 1 pairing point. Last, if program A does not overlap in research sharing, it will not receive any additional points. This criterion should indicate an at risk or stable program's potential to share resources with a growing program.

The last criterion involves university cost per student credit hour. Each program was labeled as low, medium, or high-cost ($< \$245, < \$295, > \$296$ respectively). Low-cost programs received 2 positive points, medium cost programs received 1 positive point, and high-cost programs received 0 points. I chose to assign points this way so traditionally more expensive programs, like nursing, were not negatively impacted based on cost. Alternatively, low-cost programs could receive positive points.

The final program viability score is calculated simply by adding all points earned. Programs are assigned to the category of disinvest if they earn 2-3 points, maintain if they earn 4-6 points, or invest if they earn 7+ points. Programs who earned a score of 4 are assigned the category of maintain with caution. This will serve as a warning to programs who may be maintained, but are underperforming. Once again, these boundaries are relatively arbitrary, so the final decisions will require human input.

Additionally, the scale can be adjusted to be used in a more continuous way, however due to natural variance in year-by-year data, these types of methods are susceptible to outliers.

Rather, the use of a discrete scale is more robust. It is important to acknowledge that this scale is one way to analyze available data to make data-informed decisions when defining and evaluating the health of a program, but other methods and the human aspects of program prioritization cannot be ignored.

Why These Considerations

The percent change indicates if a program is increasing or decreasing in enrollment over a period of time. In general, an increase in program enrollment is good for the university, but it does not necessarily present a thorough narrative of the program as a whole. For example, a 20% enrollment increase in a large program means more than a 20% increase in a small program. For these reasons, it is important to take into account size of the program. For instance, if you have a very large program that supports hundreds of students, even if it has shown a decrease in enrollment, defunding the program would impact many students and likely negatively impact the institution as a whole. Finally, program overlap was considered because programs who share resources could operate under a similar budget structure.

Data I would have liked to have had access to

I wish I had access to institutional revenue details because it is possible my framework assigned "disinvest" to a program that is the result of a donation with restrictions. Furthermore, I would have liked to know which programs have overlapping resources rather than assuming this information. Other useful data would include the specific criteria Core College is using during their program prioritization process and accompanying information so data could accurately portray a narrative of each program based on the defined program prioritization criteria.

Final Calculations

Resource Allocation Final Score
Disinvest: 2-3
Maintain with Caution: 4
Maintain: 5-6
Invest: x ≥ 7

Associate Degree Program	FA10 Population score	Paired Program Score	% Growth Score	Cost Score	Total Score	Resource Allocation
Criminal Justice	1	2	1	2	6	Maintain
Elec Engineering Tech	1	3	1	0	5	Maintain
Mech Engineering Tech	1	3	1	0	5	Maintain
Business	1	2	1	2	6	Maintain
Family Studies	1	0	1	2	4	Maintain
Organizational Leadership	1	0	1	1	3	Disinvest
Liberal Arts	3	1	2	2	8	Maintain
Nursing	3	3	3	0	9	Invest
Railroad Technology	1	0	1	0	2	Disinvest
Science	1	2	2	0	5	Maintain
Other *	1	0	1	na	2	Disinvest

Baccalaureate Degree Program	FA10 Population score	Paired Program Score	% Growth Score	Cost Score	Final Score	Resource Allocation
Biology	2	2	2	0	6	Maintain
Business	4	1	2	2	9	Invest
Criminal Justice BA	1	2	1	2	6	Maintain
Criminal Justice BS	4	1	2	2	9	Invest
Communications	3	0	2	1	6	Maintain
El & Kindergarten Ed	4	0	1	2	7	Invest
Electromech Engineering	4	1	3	0	8	Invest
English	2	0	3	0	5	Maintain
Environmental Studies	2	2	1	0	5	Maintain
Food Services	4	3	3	2	12	Invest
Hotel Management	2	3	3	2	10	Invest
Integrative Arts	2	2	2	0	6	Maintain
Liberal Arts	2	2	1	2	7	Invest
Mathematics	2	2	3	2	9	Invest
Mathematics-Systems Analysis	1	3	2	0	6	Maintain
Nursing-RN to BS	3	3	1	0	7	Invest
Nursing BS	4	3	3	0	10	Invest
Political Science	1	0	3	2	6	Maintain
Psychology BA	2	2	2	2	8	Invest
Psychology BS	3	2	2	1	8	Invest
Science	1	2	3	0	6	Maintain
Security & Risk Analysis	1	0	3	2	6	Maintain
Visual Arts Studies	1	2	2	1	6	Maintain