

# **Research & Analytical Services Qualitative Study College-Wide SWOT Analysis**

Study Dates: July 10, 2018 – Aug. 8, 2018 José Luis Cano, Institutional Research Analyst

South Texas College (STC) strives to fulfill its mission of achieving student success, nurturing talent, and promoting economic vitality through a quality education. STC seeks continual improvement in all facets of the institution—tangible and intangible—to realize this mission. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis was conducted to identify and assess internal and external forces impacting the institution; furthermore, the SWOT Analysis will assist in strategic planning.

### **Overview of Findings**

The SWOT Analysis revealed a myriad of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Hence, this report focused on the five categories most cited in each portion. Strengths consisted of STC's affordability, program offerings, faculty/staff, equipment/technology, and student support services while Weaknesses included understaffing, outreach, internal processes, communication, and STC culture. Opportunities emerged in the forms of partnerships, program offerings, funding, student placements, and the dual credit sphere. Competing institutions, negative perceptions, reduction of funding, and labor market trends populated Threats. Methodology

A SWOT Analysis was conducted with participant feedback gathered from July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018. A researcher facilitated nine feedback sessions with a total of 72 participants. The groups represented each STC division and campus, cultivating a healthy and comprehensive perception of the institution. The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of each individual group's feedback. Then, the researcher compared descriptors across all groups, which resulted in identifying common themes (Please see figures below for a comprehensive list—the surface area for each category bases itself on frequency as expressed by groups, so a larger surface area depicts more feedback on that category and its subcategories).

### Strengths

Participants identified 1) affordability, 2) program offerings, 3) faculty and staff, 4) equipment and technology, and 5) student support services as the most prominent Strengths within STC. STC's affordability unequivocally appeared in the responses for its excellent value for an education, low tuition rates, and debt-free status for most students. The wide-ranging certificates and degrees offered at STC featured prominently because of the programs' diversity in degree plans, multiple modalities, and versatility in the job market. Because of their dedication to the students, expertise in their areas, and resourcefulness in their positions, faculty and staff materialized as Strengths. Additionally, the institution boasted cutting-edge equipment and technology in the classrooms for instruction and in its infrastructure for operations. Student support services surfaced as Strengths because of a robust library, sturdy tutoring, and collegewide innovation.

### Weaknesses

Participants articulated Weaknesses in 1) understaffing, 2) outreach, 3) internal processes, 4) communication, and 5) STC culture. Understaffing in a multitude of departments emerged as the most distressing Weakness, a Weakness causing latent processes, lack of sufficient support, and a dearth of personnel for large-scale projects. An absence of a public relations office at every campus, a deficiency in program specific marketing, and an unequal

distribution of marketing resources earned outreach the second most noted Weakness. Internal processes, a third Weakness, required modifying for efficiency, updating for new information, and transplanting into digital environments. Communication fossilized as a Weakness due to institutional silos, oversaturation of information, and inconsistent updates to procedural and policy changes. A famine of STC culture in the community and on campus existed because of a scarcity in an active student community, insufficient campus personality (i.e., monuments, traditions, mascot), and a dis-identification from the K-12 setting with STC.

#### **Opportunities**

Participants voiced the following Opportunities: 1) partnerships, 2) student placements, 3) funding, 4) labor market trends, and 5) STC culture. Partnerships with 4-year universities, school districts, labor industries, governmental entities, and other community colleges concretized as an Opportunity. Student placements, a second Opportunity, encompassed course placements upon matriculation, apprenticeships and networking during schooling, and job placements post-graduation. Regional labor market trends emerged as an Opportunity due to the influx of industries to the area and increased demand for professionals in health, technology, and technical areas. Re-igniting fruitful relationships with the community, creating internal and external STC traditions, and enhancing visibility of programs at STC prompted STC culture to rise as an Opportunity.

#### Threats

Threats materialized in the forms of 1) competing institutions, 2) negative perceptions, 3) funding, 4) dual credit issues, and 5) labor market trends. Competing institutions included proprietary institutions, universities, and online schools, entities that may cause student and employee attrition. Negative perceptions surfaced as a Threat because of poor perception toward STC, a general devaluation of higher education, and an image of violence in the region. A reduction of funding posed a Threat at local, state, and federal levels. At state and federal levels, concerns over grants, financial aid, and tax revenue lurked; at a local level, issues with bond fatigue arose. As a Threat, dual credit issues pointed toward its negative impact on STC enrollment, competition from other institutions, and skepticism of the program at the state level. Labor market trends appeared as a Threat because of industries that hire personnel with minimal credentials and a boom in the local economy.

#### Looking Forward: A Collaborative Portrait

This SWOT Analysis sketched, in broad strokes, perceptions of internal and external forces impacting the institution as a whole—in a sense, a collaborative portrait of STC. With students, employees, and the community serving as an audience, STC, much like an artist, has the opportunity and obligation to assess its portrait, paint over faulty brush strokes, and incorporate new but essential colors.

# Strengths

Affordable			Equip. &	Equip. & Tech.			Courses			Innovation			Link with				Collaborati		
vs. Competition						Modal	ition												
	Bachelor' S Institutional									Community Partners		Serving ommunit – Y	Between I Cross- functi		taff, Faculty,				
Debt- Payment Education Free Options						Class Sizes Variety Facilities		Disposition Application Work Environment					rvice			dmins			
Program Offerings		Classroom Support	Classroom Support Services				Mainte												
	Aligned with Commur								Fringe Benefits	Safe High Rei	Good	ISDs	Industri	e Higher Ed.	Respe	ted	National		
	ty			Tutoring		Center			Transportat				Finai			Marke			
	Partici	Modalities			Accessibl	e	0					Favora	Strong						
Diverse	Bachel or's	Accredited	Library	Financia				pe n Ad	Services		Culture		ble Audits	Cost Con		rketing			
Faculty a	Faculty and Staff		Prof. Dev	Prof. Dev.				mi ssi on	Improved		Non- Traditi	Student . Engage	Stud Satisfie	dent	io	ul	Data		
						Multiple Cam			Respo	nsive	. Dual (	Credit	Custo.		p		Access		
													Rates	Passing Rates s Belief in STC		ngs	Available		
Advis						Supportiv	Stru ctur ve e	Prompt		Advance	Edu. Size	Delle			Growth				
Dedicated	ated (Staff) (Fa Cross-trained Externa		xternal	Strong Visionar		/	Effective		Quality		Missior	n Product	withi Colleg		Local Area				

## Weaknesses

Understaffed			STC Cul	ture		Facilities				Customer Service				Resou	Resources				Student Barriers		
	Due t	Due to Budget		Campus Identity	in Com munit y	Improvement S	Approp iate Space	F	unctio ning		e Infori ersonne		Frustrat d Student Smiles		Distrib	ution	Wa ste d	Aı Requir			lege Jiness Aid
General	Slow	Processes	ty	Student Input		Hiring Processes Onl		Onli	line Usability		ility	ty Leadership			Growth			Finances		S	
Outreach	51000	110003303	Student Servi		es			w		Black				ogra							
PR Offices			Housi		_		or k St ud	k St		boa d Trai s ing.		impl m e Cha Veb Ove site ade	rs Plan			əst	Cos ts	Budge		Structura I	
Equal Marketin	g Campu ses	Strong er	Health		a Orien tation	Cumbersome			Fa	culty	y	Sig	Signage		aff	Cour		ses		Coordina	
Program Specifi	c Spanisł	Specific Popul	Child Care			Programs			Instruction al Methods Adj				Limited Advanc	Resi	SISTA		nequal		Scheduling of		
Internal Pr	rocesses		Competitive Wages				Lac kin	Can	Job	Resi	Lost !	Students		ement nt		Distribution across Campuse		Projects			
			-					g De	ce	S	st	Programs Continui		Support	Support Needed		Scheduling		Ac	Across Campuse	
						Bachelor's (Limi	ted)	m	Perc	ception				Info.		Parti		ers		Duplicat	
	Cumber some		-	Employ ees Leave	vs. Edu. Instituti ons	Advising		Lacki	-					Undata		Clea n D	More Areas	Strair d Relat	Pro	oced	Service s
Inefficient	Paper- based	Prioritie s	Low Pay	Low Pay vs. Industries		ng acro		ng	Second Option		on	Certificates			Update D						
Communic	ation		Dual Cr	edit Iss	ues	Process		ss Ca	Based	on Ar	ea	Woi	rkfor								
	Dre	20055				Enrollment			Prof.	De	<b>v.</b>	Tra	ansport	••• Donate	Scho shi		Facilitie s	Natur Disasi rs	e De	valu ed	Unorga nized
Process Changes					Growth				Respec	t				Parki	ng		Tech.	ch.		Workload	
		Free Cours		STC-ISDs Commu nity	Retention	Decli	ne	ful of Work Schedu e		ōoo uch avel		e Trips fusing	Expand ed	Spec Are		Softwar e		nf ra 5 Ad	mins	General	

# Opportunities

Partnerships			Labor Marl	Affordable			Emplo	oyees		Policies		Financial Aid						
4-year		ISDs			Align Programs		ndustries	vs. Compe	tition	No Debt	Develop	R	ecruit	State	Federal	Financial Literacy	Scholarships	
			G	Gra	STC Culture		K-12		Alumni			Campuses		Comm. Service				
Comm unity College	Govern mental	muusu		d Sch ools														
s Stude	s Entities New Partners Student Placements									Conti nued	Partner	ship F	oundation	Multiple	Create More	General	Tied to Academ ics	
1			Vetworking		In Community A		At STC	Informed ISDs		Progr	Continuing Ed.		Internal		Int. Rela	ations		
					Dual Credit Sphere			Recruiting Efforts										
		Network							HS	2- year Coll	General		GED	Org. Structure	Gree n Initi tive	a	Interna tional	
Job		Apprenti hips	Apprentices Cou hips ses						Students	ege	Programs/Centers		Centers	Local		Cost	Prepared	
Funding			11103 303		Recruit to STC		Resoluti ons	General	Militar y	Online Stud			Technology					
					Population			Reputation			Center s	Health			Believ	OER	Disasters	
		Tuition								More	Dista	nce E	d.	Eco. Development	e in Edu.			
		Turtion	Tuition				th C						Accreditatio	on	Vendors Technolog	Objectives		
							Div			muni ty						Technolog		
Grants		Bond		onati ons	Growth		ersi ty	Positive Ir	nage	Colle ge	Expand		4-year	STC's	Comp Fail	Banner	Cloud-Based Services	

## Threats

Competing Instituti	Funding (Reduction)				Labor I				Loss of Personnel							
			ction S	State and Federal					Not Align ed with Prog rams			Leadership Posit		Hirin ns Proce	g Com	ack npetit 2 Pay
						State and				Emergenc	y Situ	ations K-1		2		
Higher Ed.	Proprietary Schools		Accred												Limite Resour	
			on (Failure)		Property Tax	Unfriendly Legislation		Financial Liability					Dromoting Other			
Distance Ed.		Tax Fatigue Student Ba		nt Balano	ces				У	Weather		Shoot ers		Promoting Other Colleges		ing to st
Negative Perceptio	ns	Dual Credit Issue		sues		Attack on Part- Time Border				Tech. Char	nge		Partn		ersh	
						Students Polic		Laws	uits							
						Student Obstacles										
										Keeping Up		Using	It	Control Over Demands	Increas Vend Pricir	dor
									Unrealistic Expe		ectations		Stu	dent		
STC	Higher Ed.	Competing Pro		Skepti	icism	Finances										
Region		Free Courses	Free Courses		STC hrollment	Placement Testing		Trave	el	More Results, S Resources	ame	OE Textb		Behavior		Expe ctati ons