

# Planning Committee Completes Initial SWOT Analysis

## Initial Analysis Reveals Many Strengths and Opportunities

Across September and October, the Bellevue College Strategic Planning Committee met with advisors from EAB to begin the institution's strategic planning process, and to make an initial assessment of its existing strengths and weaknesses in its operations, opportunities for improvement and future growth, and external threats to its continued thriving and service. The Committee's insights are summarized below and will aid in identifying potential strategic imperatives for the College's strategic plan.

### Strengths and Opportunities



#### Strengths

*Current Attributes, Programs, and Services that Enable BC to Succeed and Grow*

- The institution's relatively large size and attractive geographic location represent natural competitive differentiators that distinguish Bellevue College
- Diversity among faculty, staff, and especially students creates a community and atmosphere on campus that is difficult to find elsewhere
- A strong portfolio of programs, including healthcare programs, four-year degrees, pathways, and niche programs not offered at other institutions offer BC an advantage relative to its peers and competitors
- Students, staff, and faculty, up through President May, foster a culture and community committed to equity, inclusion, and continuous improvement on campus
- Robust student services, from student support, veterans' programs, freedom afforded to student clubs, and strong technology offer an attractive experience for students
- Bellevue College's affordability and fiscal sustainability make it a strong and safe choice for students focused on ROI



#### Opportunities

*External Trends, Partnerships, and Dynamics that Advantage BC's Position*

- A thriving technology sector in the greater Seattle area presents extensive opportunities for partnership to educate, train, and employ BC students and graduates
- Strong K12 system partnerships can expand dual enrollment in the future
- Community organizations, nonprofits, and even local four-year institutions, especially those located in and around Bellevue, represent potential partners for BC's mission
- Bellevue College's diverse student body presents the opportunity to formalize the institution's commitment to educating the greater Seattle area's diversifying community
- Expanding housing options on and around campus offer current and prospective students an immersive educational experience
- A large and successful alumni community offer connections to current students, philanthropic funds to the institution, and support to the campus community
- New and innovative academic programs, inspired by local workforce needs and campus talent, can prepare current and future students to thrive

## Executive Summary, Continued

### Weaknesses and Threats



#### Weaknesses

##### *Current Operating Conditions that Inhibit BC's Ability to Serve and Thrive*

- Many policies, practices, and traditions on campus may be calcified and difficult to change, though they may require modification or adaptation to meet today's challenges
- Faculty and staff do not consistently reflect the diversity of BC's student community, and academic offerings do not consistently meet the needs of international and English language learners, among others
- BC continues to struggle to find the optimal mix of on-campus, online, and hybrid courses to meet students' needs, and can be hampered by outdated instructional spaces
- Recent and frequent leadership turnover can foster mistrust and fatigue
- A "shallow bench" of faculty and staff, combined with hiring challenges, mean vacancies can remain open and current employees can be stretched thin
- Inconsistent AI policies negatively affect academic and administrative operations
- Deferred maintenance and aged campus infrastructure create risks for BC's continued operations and limit opportunities for growth



#### Threats

##### *External Factors that Could Impact BC's Strategic Position in the Future*

- State funding allocations could decrease in the future, affecting current operations
- Bellevue and surrounding areas are increasingly unaffordable for students, staff, and faculty members, inhibiting BC's ability to recruit and retain its community members
- College "nonconsumption," alternative pathways to the workforce, and a declining perception of the value of higher education threaten BC's position as an educational provider and trainer
- Other local colleges and universities offering similar degrees may attract prospective BC students away from the institution
- A volatile political situation complicates BC's ability to plan for the future
- Declines in high school graduates in, and college-going aged residents of Washington and surrounding states threaten BC's future enrollment prospects

\*Note that "Artificial Intelligence" appeared as a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat.

## Next Steps

The Strategic Planning process will next incorporate input from Bellevue College's community, including a series of listening sessions with students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders and constituencies vital to BC's future success. Be on the lookout in the next few months for an invitation to participate and make your voice heard.