

SWOT Recap - 2023-2028 Strategic Planning Process

Strengths

Faculty

- faculty strive to know students and build supportive relationships
- knowledgeable in subjects and provide connection with content to real world
- dedicated to student success

Small Size

- students, staff, faculty have built a small community feel on campus where students feel known
- campus size contributes to the ability to do more -faculty autonomy, uniqueness and diversity of programs
- faculty and employees support students by engaging with them, showing up, communicating

History

- EC traditions build sense of community
- EC has a rich history that could be highlighted more (Mark Twain, women's studies)

Resources for Students

- academic and mental health support services accessible to students
- opportunities for student engagement (activities, athletics, campus life)

Flexibility

- willing to learn to make meaningful change
- adding new programs and majors to meet trends and student needs/wants

Beauty

- EC architectural beauty
- campus grounds attractive

Alumni

- supportive of campus community
- financially supportive

Weaknesses

Finances

- lack of financial stability prevents hiring and retention of strong employees and talent while forcing current employees to take on more roles and responsibilities without appropriate compensation
- not able to make changes that may improve school including adding additional programs, sports
- structures cannot be upgrade or fixed to meet student and faculty demands, deter students from attending
- financial opportunities not being explored or maximized resulting in diminished financial stability- improved enrolment recruitment, community relationships, grant opportunities, expand programs

Lack of communication

- silos between departments/offices/admin
- lack of continuity (no repository to communicate after someone leaves)

Safety

- lacking in student safeguards such as blue lights, improved lighting across campus
- EC is vulnerable to cyber security threats due to lack of upgrading

Enrollment

- need to expand recruitment territory; may be impacted by lack of employee innovation due to employee pool consisting of EC graduates
- need to collaborate with faculty to sell the school, engage with prospects

Diversity related matters

- lack of supports of diverse student body
- lack of diverse staff/faculty
- EC is lacking in diverse staff and student body
- EC not providing supports to international students

Dining related issues

- accessibility to dining for all students across campus with expanded hours, locations, and options beyond Parkhurst
- improve quality and options to meet student needs

Employee support

- employees lack opportunity for development and growth including professional development and opportunities to advance in different jobs on campus
- employees not treated equally in terms of compensation and benefits
- decisions made appear arbitrary without input from employees

Instability

- turnover across all aspects of the campus leads to instability and lack of continuity between employees
- leadership is lacking in higher level employees resulting in a lack of unity of message and vision and promotes division between departments
- constant feeling of needing to recover from employee departures

Opportunities

Collaboration

- develop partnerships with local high schools and colleges to expand programs that may act as a feeder system to EC programs (hold afternoon classes for HS students to come to campus and take courses)
- partner with local community for improved opportunities (financial community engagement, internships, build relationship that change the relationship between EC and local community)
- additional connection with Lecom-our students being able to benefit from their facilities also
- masters (+1) at other schools
- lack of partnering with alumni on fundraising; recruitment

Redefine identity

- EC needs to explore who they want to be
- small brand, SLAC, may be detrimental in recruiting students
- university v. college
- developing an identity that attracts students
- what is the EC story

Expansion of programs

- trade focus
- certificate programs
- professional programs

- CEU's
- add more majors that are in demand
- add more graduate options
- add more online options
- STEAM

Improve employee relations, processes

- develop a more unified communication system to improve communication flow across campus including sharing internal job opportunities
- use resources that exist to for employee development for all employees
- employee recognition (not just faculty)
- bring communities together to build community
- proactive in employee movement/losses by developing operating manuals/procedures to support continuity and employee competence

Student life

- create more opportunities for students to engage with each other and the campus (intramurals, exercise classes, fitness activities, field trips)
- partnership with food options off campus (use flex, discount)
- mentor programs between seniors and freshman
- services open later to meet student needs (library, CC)

Facility improvements

- AC
- increased and improved lounge spaces for students (across campus and in dorms)
- clean up campus (improve visual appearance of campus)
- vending machines throughout campus for employees and students
- water fountains expanded throughout campus
- address aging buildings issues (across the board and specific with Carnegie and asbestos)
- improve appearance of Hilfiger school-collaborate with art program to improve the outside appearance to improve marketing the program/showcasing the program
- MAC could be a draw for additional funding opportunities (student athletes, community use)

Threats

Instability related to employee retention

- turnover is too frequent and results in lack of continuity
- lack of repository (operators manual)

Global issues

- education as a whole is being devalued globally
- economic issues (recession, post-covid)
- social issues (isms, gun violence, DEI)

Stagnation

- not adapting quick enough
- EC not taking risks to grow and change (possibly due to fear of alumni support)

Financial return

- students will go elsewhere to get same/similar programs
- need to market ourselves differently to stand out from the other options for students

Lack of programs/opportunities

- cannot compete with schools that offer more (athletics, majors)
- internships
- placement options after school

Reputation

- negative and impacts ability to attract and retain quality employees
- lack of positive relationship with local community resulting in alienating EC and losing opportunities

Financial status

- inability to maintain current status or improve (infrastructure, technology, student services)

Loss of alumni support

- perception of mismanagement that may drive away support
- move away from traditions (SLAC)

The following items were identified in the focus group sessions and are not necessarily strategic plan goals, but rather potentially manageable changes in a shorter term:

MyEC - more user friendly, instruction for students

Dining-expand use of flex to Mackenzies

- access flex balance on MyEc
- options across campus
- connect with local food options for discounts
- post menu, hours consistently
- expand hours to meet student needs
- menu to meet student needs
- Harris Café-or something for students on that side of campus for days of labs

Water fountains (for bottle fills)

Vending machines

Computers-keyboards without letters on keys (look at equipment and fix/swap out)

Printers in residence halls

Expanded hours of library

Designated areas for EC students only in the library

Recreational activities for students who are not athletes (intramurals, clubs, fitness classes)

Expand community engagement and reframe it as more of opportunity than requirement

- expand distance and locations

- add more options

- split it up not just 60 hrs by graduation (x amount by each year)

Faculty/Employee Eagle Feed for communication

Assigned faculty rep to meet w/provost as a representative (rotating position with dual responsibilities)

Partnership between academics and athletics -improve communication, expectations

Partnership between faculty and admissions

Campus lighting for safety

Night classes in a central location rather than spread on both sides of campus for more security

Required use of ID's to get into buildings all of the time

2 MH counselors-male and female

WIFI-what is current slowdown issue since Christmas break

Shuttle for students to stores and athletic events (MAC)

- partner with town bus system (free/reduced pass for students)

Health Center-need more options (weekends), can we partner w/ urgent care?

HR-expand communication to employees, improve onboarding process

Operator manual/repository development

Employee recognition (annually, monthly)

Suggestion "boxes" for employees

Employee wellness options-use of health center/gym; know options and programs available to them -HR may be too small to add on to their current tasks

EXAMPLES OF LONG-FILL SURVEY DATA

“A thriving campus filled with curious, students seeking to get an incredible four-year education in their field of interest. An academic staff that is committed to engaging all students to the best of their abilities.

Extracurricular sports and activities that draw students to the college. And a loyal and participatory alumni population that returns to campus regularly, donates at the highest level possible and helps to build awareness in their community about their alma mater”

Recruit donors in all classes and statuses, offering the opportunity to donate \$10 monthly similar to political campaigns and churches. Continue seeking the 10k donations too. Have quarterly contests between classes and donors giving prizes for highest gift. Prizes can be EC Chairs, home decor, etc that are classy and desired. Create small businesses as part of the curriculum that promote EC traditions. Have all levels of students be employed to formulate the business, provide leadership, accounting, and assembly line workers to create EC Apparel and/or the Beanies for the incoming Freshman Class. Students get paid, experience, credit for class, and giving to the college community today and "tomorrow." Create and manage vaccination clinics and home healthcare jobs for Nursing students.

As someone who currently works in higher ed (a large private institution), I believe that EC needs to work much harder on re-branding its social media presence to better engage prospective students and families. The photos and content that are currently posted are out of date, unengaging, and wildly 10 years behind the times. Additionally, I believe that EC needs to work to not only recruit students that come from a variety of backgrounds but also work to have the resources on campus to support these students while attending EC. It's one thing to get them in the door, but another to actually get them to want to stay.

At Johns Hopkins University, where I'm a professor, finds that the largest undergraduate major in Arts and Sciences is public health with nearly 500 students. Despite being a university with strong traditions in the sciences and engineering it is the population based public health major that has attracted students committed to this lifetime career goal. Linking traditional liberal arts undergraduate education and values to community concerns about health is a powerful message for many undergraduates that I interact with. Elmira College can become a nexus for these efforts and many in the philanthropic community would support these initiatives.