2021 - 2025

TREND STATEMENTS

SUMMARY

WEST VIRGINIA NORTHERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spring 2020, the office of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Research (PIER) conducted an Environmental Scan to identify trends expected to impact the WVNCC service area in the next three-five years. Trends in eight scan areas---Competition, Demographics, Economics, Education, Labor Force, Politics, Social Values and Lifestyles, and Technology---were identified. Another scan area, Emerging Industries, was added to address the anticipated industrial growth because of the gas industry and its upstream and downstream supply chain, including construction, manufacturing, chemicals, plastics, and other natural gas industry components.

More than 60 stakeholders, including faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the Board of Governors, volunteered on nine scan teams and during three months developed 54 trend statements. Final trend statements were reviewed for overlaps and duplication. Trend statements with similar focus were consolidated, and duplicated trends were removed. This final document includes 48 trend statements with supporting rationale and sources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of a strategic plan is a team effort. The team consisted of faculty, staff, administrators, and Board of Governors' (BOG) members. Thanks to the nine Environmental Scan Team Chairs and members for working diligently on the Environmental Scanning Project. **Scan Team Chairs** Debbie Bennett, Dr. Dennis Bills, Jenna Derrico, Alicia Frey, Daniel Gomez, Karri Mulhern, Ina Robinson, Ida Williams, and Rebecca Yesenczki, and **team members** Tami Alfred, Kristi Aulick, Melanie Baker, Regan Blaha, Lee Ann Blair, R.J. Canter, Debbie Cresap, Anita Dahlem, Frank DeCaria, Shelley DeLuca, Kelly Dlesk, Jeremy Doolin, Darcey Ferrell, Rachael Ferrise, Robert Gibb, Crystal Harbert, Joan Harvath, David Hays, Curtis Hippensteel, Dana Indermuhle, Christian Kefauver (BOG), Jill Keyser, Julie Kloss, John Labriola, John Lantz, Michael Lawson, Said Leghlid, Ardell Mayhugh, MaryJean McIntosh, Rustem Mulyuk, Bonnie Peterman, Tami Pitcher, Patricia Roper, Kaeden Rustemeyer, Lisa Soly, Rana Spurlock, Dr. Greg Winland, and Sara Wood worked together during the COVID -19 challenges and completed the project ahead of schedule.

Thanks to the President's Cabinet for serving as a resource for the scan teams. The **President's Cabinet** included David Barnhardt, Peggy Carmichael, Dr. Jill Loveless, Stephanie Kappel, Dr. Daniel Mosser (President), Jeff Sayre, Dr. Purnima "Pam" Sharma, and Larry Tackett. Sincere thanks are extended to Joel Lapin to guide the teams throughout the Environmental Scanning process and to the Continuous Improvement Council to provide feedback on the trends.

Finally, the Information Technology staff is thanked for setting-up Zoom software and making it possible for teams to communicate synchronously when the COVID-19 virus forced the institution to work remotely. Also appreciated is Judi Hendrickson's work into setting up Zoom meetings with Mr. Lapin and scan teams, and taking meeting notes.

TRENDS

COMPETITION

Trend 1: Colleges and universities that increase online course availability and program offerings will likely see a growing student enrollment.

Trend 2: Trade Schools and organized union apprenticeships will continue to be competitors for students in the future.

Trend 3: Demand for flexible learning and credentialing options is on the rise, as are projections of enrolled students pursuing these options through 2025.

Trend 4: Digital badging, online validation of achievement, skill, or credential, is rapidly growing with employers as remote work and virtual teams become the new norm, and modern learners express themselves digitally.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Trend 1: The WVNCC service area is populated by an increasingly older population and is projected to have almost half of its residents older than 45, including one quarter 65 and older, in 2030.

Trend 2: The local population of the WVNCC service area has decreased from 2010 through 2019 by approximately 13,500 (5%) and is projected to decline through 2030.

Trend 3: The demographics of the service area continue to show little to no change during the next three-five years, with a population estimated at 94% white, 4% Black/African-American, and the remaining population of 2% as Native American and Alaska Native and Asian. The College population reflects this composition.

Trend 4: Poverty rates for the counties served by WVNCC likely are to remain above the national average (11.8%) but below the state average (17.8%).

ECONOMICS

Trend 1: Geopolitical strife between oil-producing countries, coupled with the COVID virus, likely will lower energy demand in the future.

Trend 2: The low response rate by West Virginia residents to the US Census will adversely affect federal funding decisions and revenue received by the state for the next ten years.

Trend 3: Job losses, high unemployment, business restrictions, and closures associated with COVID-19 likely lead to continued economic hardship for residents of the College's service area.

Trend 4: Personal income associated with COVID-19 likely will remain stagnant as the economy struggles to adjust during the pandemic.

Trend 5: COVID-19 will create a significant decline in state and county tax revenue that will negatively impact public higher education funding in the future.

EDUCATION

Trend 1: Many higher education institutions are moving to open educational resources (many offered freely and openly for educators and students to use and re-use for teaching and learning) as an alternative to commercial course materials.

Trend 2: WVNCC service area schools (K-12) will see a decline in enrollment during the next five years.

Trend 3: As more colleges and universities grow an online presence, admission to institutions and access to classes will require advanced technology/processes to manage both faster admission processes and innovative learning strategies.

Trend 4: Early Entrance /Dual Credit enrollment is increasing.

EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Trend 1: Jobs in the transportation and warehousing industry are increasing in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia and are projected to increase through 2026.

Trend 2: The future construction of the proposed Dilles Bottom Cracker Plant in Belmont County OH, and the ongoing construction of the Monaca Cracker Plant in Beaver County, PA, will employ up to an estimated 7,000 skilled trade workers daily for the next several years, including steamfitters, ironworkers, carpenters, and operating engineers.

Trend 3: When complete, multiple cracker plants will employ approximately 600 workers each, including administrators, electrical and instrument technicians, analyzer technicians, and process or chemical plant operator technicians and mechanics, et al.

Trend 4: Because of product shortages during the COVID-19 crisis, the United States will evaluate what manufacturing and production industries should be sourced domestically rather than outsourced to overseas suppliers.

LABOR FORCE

Trend 1: West Virginia has the lowest labor force participation rate in the United States, with no real growth projected in the next three-five years.

Trend 2: Future high-demand occupational growth in the Northern Panhandle Region through 2026 is expected to be in jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree or higher. The occupational growth of moderate and lower-demand jobs will require a mixture of education and training needs.

Trend 3: Future occupational growth in the College's region will occur because of the gas industry and its supply chain, including construction, manufacturing, chemicals, plastics, and other components of the natural gas industry.

Trend 4: Increases in middle-skill jobs---typically jobs requiring less than a bachelor's degree and paying a living wage---that often require digital skills are likely to occur in the future, whereas those that do not have these requirements will offer less in career opportunities and advancement.

Trend 5: While the effects of coronavirus on unemployment rates in the region are not certain at this time, research indicates that higher unemployment likely will be the case in the future.

Trend 6: The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world what industries are considered essential and where there are gaps in the labor force. Likely to see growth are health-related industries, including the manufacture of medical instruments and supplies; energy; retail; and industries that can support remote work and education. Workers with postsecondary credentials will fare better in the post-coronavirus.

POLITICS

Trend 1: Disinvestment in West Virginia higher education is leading to the exploration of alternative funding models.

Trend 2: The West Virginia Legislature will continue to prioritize institutional flexibility as opposed to a centralized model of higher education, shifting responsibility and oversight from the Higher Education Policy Commission and the Community and Technical College System to the Boards of Governors of individuals institutions.

Trend 3: The rising costs of higher education create access challenges for West Virginia students, and state efforts to maintain higher education access are inadequate in rising tuition and fees.

Trend 4: The West Virginia Legislature will prioritize enhancing and expanding broadband internet and high-speed wireless technologies throughout the state.

SOCIAL VALUES & LIFESTYLE

Trend 1: The need for mental health services in Appalachia continues to increase as access to services has decreased.

Trend 2: With the increase in individuals with developmental disabilities (non-institutionalized prevalence age: 18-64), the trend will expand additional adaptive programs and supports.

Trend 3: For the period 2008-2018, violent crime has largely declined nationwide. In West Virginia, trends in drug arrests and non-violent crimes have seen a drastic increase that likely will continue in the future.

Trend 4: Despite bipartisan calls to treat drug addiction as a public health issue rather than as a crime, and despite the legalization of marijuana in more states, arrests for drugs increased again last year.

Trend 5: In the next three to five years, West Virginia will have a more significant number and percentage of older residents while its younger populations (in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s) are likely to leave the state for opportunities found elsewhere.

Trend 6: Educational attainment generally is lower in the Appalachian region than nationally, with the proportion of students obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher lower in all but one state.

Trend 7: In addition to the increase in the number of individuals who self-identify (those who do not adhere to traditional and historical definitions), societal definitions of sexuality and gender classifications will be challenged and subject to change.

Trend 8: There is a steady decline in church attendance in the US and West Virginia, which is likely to increase in localities populated by younger people.

Trend 9: West Virginia's opioid crisis is increasing the number of youth in the foster care system or being reared by relatives.

Trend 10: The social-behavioral model that studies how communities respond to abrupt changes to their learning environment may predict disruptions to the social interactions that are part of human behavior. COVID-19 is an event that has disrupted the human-environmental lifestyles of individuals and communities in their natural habitats. The responses to it at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, and community levels are conflicted because of the types of media that influenced individual behaviors.

TECHNOLOGY

Trend 1: As online education continues to increase, nudge technology (a collection of technology---cloud, mobile, social, and data---that work interchangeably to offer personalized interaction with students, staff, and faculty) will become even more meaningful by providing the technology for students to stay on task for successful course completion.

Trend 2: Technology has an enormous impact on daily lives by altering everyday tasks and, as it continues to evolve, both positive and negative impacts only will increase.

Trend 3: Technology and social media will cause an increase in demand for connectivity and access to information while dictating professional and personal social interaction.

Trend 4: Mobile device usage (smartphones and tablets) and education will continue to be a significant technology in the future.

Trend 5: The prevalence of Virtual Technology (VR) in the classroom will increase in use as the need for access to educational training is becoming more important, and VR is projected to be used to improve the quality of professional learning via individualized digital content.

Trend 6: Educational institutions continue to rely on and upgrade technologies, devices, and online learning methodologies without meeting the accessibility needs.