

# Research & Analysis

*A service of the offices of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, Management Information Systems  
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## PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE: USING ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING TO INFORM OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### Purpose

Environmental Scanning is the process of identifying future external trends, events, and emerging issues likely to impact the College. When used in conjunction with an internal analysis of college performance (e.g. Critical Success Factors), environmental scanning reveals internal strengths, weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats (SWOT). Environmental scanning better prepares the College to structure programs according to public needs and to take a proactive approach in responding to likely external opportunities and threats. With new industries coming to the Tampa Bay area, Hillsborough Community College (HCC) should be ready to provide these businesses with capable, qualified employees.

### Methodology

In collaboration with college librarians data were gathered on the latest trends, events, and emerging issues relevant to the Tampa Bay area. Information was compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BEER), Florida Statistical Abstracts, the Enterprise Florida website ([www.eFlorida.com](http://www.eFlorida.com)), the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and Tampa/ Hillsborough County government websites to name a few.

These data were then sorted into six categories using a conventional scanning taxonomy; they are:

1. Demographic, e.g. population issues, race, gender, age, migration;
2. Economic/ Work Force, e.g. employment, income, poverty, labor work force, and occupations;
3. Education (K-12), e.g. enrollment, graduation rates, academic performance, and access to college;
4. Public Policy, e.g. state/national legislative issues, the community college/ Baccalaureate debate, and accreditation standards;
5. Social/ Cultural, e.g. household composition, lifestyle; and finally,
6. Technology, e.g. new electronic devices, computer/ internet issues, and skills needed to adapt in a technologically advanced environment.

A survey was developed organized by the categories in the taxonomy. Each category was comprised of approximately five to seven trends/ events/ issues. Respondents were asked to rate the items by their level of impact on the College using a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being No Impact on HCC, 10 being High Impact on HCC).

The survey was sent to members of the 14 faculty clusters, college administrators, and to the Institutional Advisory Council. In total, there were 328 surveys distributed, and 121 returned for a 37% return rate. The survey also allowed the respondents to write in any trend or event they deemed of high impact.

### Results

The top 10 trends/ events/ emerging issues rated as having the highest impact (rating of 8 to 10) are listed below in descending order.

Rank	Item	% Rating High Impact
1	A number of the “high skill/ high wage” occupations forecasted for growth in the county for which the College prepares students are clustered in the allied health, computer, and business areas.	83.78%
2	Access vs. success will continue to be an issue. There is mounting pressure to increase success but at the same time the basic community college mission mandates open access for all students.	75.65%
3	Faculty hiring practices need to respond to the fact that nationally 50% of full-time faculty will be retiring in the next ten years. Fifty percent of Hillsborough Community College full-time faculty are age 53 or older.	74.56%
4	Hillsborough County grew during the years 1990 to 2004 to 1,101,261 residents. Population is expected to grow 23% between the years 2000 to 2010, and another 8.5% from 2010 to 2015.	74.34%
5	Net college costs for Florida low and middle- income students to attend public two- or four- year colleges represent nearly 40% of their annual family income, even after accounting for Bright Futures scholarships. Over 80% of the students in the state attend these institutions.	72.17%
6	The number of high school graduates is anticipated to grow from a 2004-05 projection of 9,259 to 11,073 graduates by the 2010-11 academic year.	71.43%
7	For the county, the annual growth of employment by industry projected through 2013 will be led by jobs in the Professional & Business Services sector, followed by Construction, Education & Health, and Leisure & Hospitality. Slower growing sectors include Information, Manufacturing, and a decline in Mining jobs.	70.43%
8	There are discussions within Florida about capping the number of credit hours that it will reimburse 4-year institutions for students who prolong degree completion. This may spill over to community colleges.	68.75%
9(tie)	The need is increasing for community colleges to form partnerships with local industry, service providers, including health providers, and governmental organizations in order to conduct contract education.	68.70%
	The impact of technology on the changing needs for work skills means that graduates must continuously adapt through life-long learning.	68.70%
10	The need for job training programs, skills certificates, and other programs with fewer general education requirements will increase. Those who have obtained these skills may seek opportunities for career development, general education and lifelong learning that can lead to higher levels of degree attainment.	68.10%

Additional trends listed by the respondents included

- an emphasis on the importance of the increase in population and migration;
- industry demands;
- concerns surrounding the matriculation of high school graduates to the community college;
- college costs and funding to community colleges;
- legislative measures of success; and
- student responses to advanced technology

#### Usage

HCC's Biennial Strategic Planning & Evaluation Process calls for an environmental scan as an early step in development of the college plan for 2007-09. The results of the scan will be used to inform the Board of Trustees and others in a review of the institution's mission, vision, and goals.

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