ABSTRACT
                   This 2001 report presents the findings of an institutional
evaluation survey conducted by South Texas Community College (STCC). The
survey asked 434 community opinion leaders to respond to 13 items by
providing the item's level of importance and a letter grade for the college's
performance on it. There were also several open-ended questions, including
one that elicited recommendations. The response rate was 52% (225). Results
included: (1) the item "provides affordable college tuition for students"
tied with "increases opportunity to attend college close to home" for the
highest mean grade of 3.46; (2) the lowest mean grade (2.99) went to "further
develops students' reading, writing, and math skills"; and (3) the item
placed at highest importance was "increases opportunity to attend college
close to home," and least important was "provides college courses for
qualified students while in high school." Administrators' specific
recommendations following this study include: (1) the almost inverse
relationship of grade and priority with respect to development of students'
reading, writing, and math skills requires further investigation; and (2)
there appears to be a dichotomy of roles--academic transfer and
vocational/technical preparation for employment--that many respondents do not
accept or cannot integrate into their understanding of the community
college's role. (JA)

STCC

South Texas Community College

STCC Report Card --

Spring 2001:

Report of Findings

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
A Division of Information and Technology Services
South Texas Community College

May 24, 2001

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Appendices

Executive Summary

- 225 (52%) of 434 community opinion leaders responded to 2001 STCC Report Card Survey

- "Grades" ranged from B (2.99) to B+ (3.46) on 13 items of interest

- All 13 items were prioritized at levels ranging from moderate to high.

- "Increases opportunity to attend college close to home: and "Provides affordable college tuition for students: both highest priority and highest grades

- Grades B+/Higher Priority
        Provides affordable college tuition for students
        Increases opportunity to attend college close to home
        Demonstrates a high level of fiscal responsibility
        Provides a high rate of return on taxpayers' investment

- Grades B+/Moderate Priority
        Provides college courses for qualified students while in high school
        Partners effectively with other organizations and institutions
        Effectively manages multi-campus operation

- Grades B/Moderate Priority
        Provides supportive environment to facilitate student success
        Provides workforce training for employers
        Provides a quality college experience for students

- Grades B/Higher Priority
        Prepares graduates for successful employment
        Prepares graduates for transfer to university for Bachelor's degree
        Further develops students' reading, writing and math skills

- Greatest discrepancy between priority and grade: Further develops students' reading, writing and math skills

- 93% of responses to open-ended response item, "The two or three words that best describe STCC to me include. . ." were positive in tone. Tended to cluster around themes of *ease of access*, *service/quality*, and *opportunity*.

- Open-ended responses to the item, "In my opinion, the best thing about STCC is. . .," tended to cluster into four themes: *access*, *opportunity*, *quality* and *employment*.

- Open-ended responses to the item, "If I could change only one specific thing about STCC, it would be. . .," could be grouped into 11 areas of comment: *funding, facilities, instructional quality, curriculum, student-related, remediation, student services, institutional growth, administration and management, location* and *workforce development*.

- 18% (n = 41) of respondents added additional hand-written comments. About 2/3 of these were positive or neutral in tone. Themes included *congratulatory notes, students, public education, opportunity, remedial education* and *growth*.

- Recommendations include: distinguishing between perception of respondents and actual condition of STCC and addressing each appropriately; using findings for continuous quality improvement at STCC, recognizing and responding to focus on *access* and *opportunity*, increasing community awareness of the availability and value of educational outcomes other than the baccalaureate, and continuing work in clarifying and extending findings of this study.

STCC Report Card – Spring 2001: Report of Findings

Overview

STCC is in its seventh year of operation and is maturing as an institution of higher education. Most of its academic, technical, workforce training, and community education programs have been in operation for a year or more. New campuses have been built and opened to accommodate student and programmatic needs. Virtually every employee and student has access to current technology to meet his/her needs. Faculty and staff are in place to manage the functions of the institution. The rate of enrollment growth, while still vigorous, has slowed somewhat and approaches a more usual rate of annual increase among community colleges. Therefore, Spring 2001 seems an appropriate point at which to assess how well the college is meeting the expectations of those in the communities it serves.

While it would have been desirable to include the entire population of the community college district in an evaluation of the College, practical considerations led to a decision to use a sample to provide the assessment.

A locally developed instrument, the 2001 STCC Report Card, was used for the mail survey. The Report Card asked that recipients respond to thirteen items by providing both the level of importance in which they held them and a letter grade for the College's performance on each. They were also asked to complete short responses providing the words that best described STCC for them and identifying the best things about STCC, as well as the one thing they would like to change about the College. Provision was also made for open-ended comments. The instrument deliberately was kept brief to encourage responses.

Overall, STCC's "grades" ranged from a low B to a B+ level. Comments and short answers demonstrated considerable variety, although a few common themes were identifiable.

Methodology

A purposive sample of 434 individuals was selected by the President from a contact list maintained by her office. Those chosen were identified as being community opinion leaders who could be expected to have awareness of STCC and its programs and to have formed personal opinions and values about them. These individuals, in the President's opinion, were those who might be expected both to reflect the opinions of their constituencies and to shape opinions among constituent groups.

They were notified by a personalized letter from the President that they would be receiving the STCC Report Card survey and asked to participate in assessing how well STCC had done. This letter preceded the instrument mailing by about one week.

The instrument mailing included a cover letter, the survey instrument, and a postage paid, pre-addressed return mail envelope. Contact information was provided for follow-up by respondents. The initial instrument mailing was followed by two reminder letters at intervals of one week. Finally, a second complete instrument mailing with a new cover letter was sent to the sample as a way of stimulating returns. Samples of letters and the instrument form Appendix A.

Although cover letters and mailing envelopes were personally addressed to recipients, using mail merge software, the instruments themselves were not marked in any way to identify recipients and no identification was requested from recipients. This study was intended to be completely anonymous as a means of encouraging candor in responses and to increase the response rate. In fact, three respondents

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services

signed their names to the returned document and at least two others used their own letterhead envelope to mail their response back, rather than the return envelope provided by STCC. Although staff in OIRE knew who had returned these responses, responses identifiable through that means became anonymous once the envelopes were separated and discarded. Names were removed from all results reported by OIRE to protect the anonymity of respondents.

The down sides of the decision to conduct this study as completely anonymous included:

• It was more expensive to conduct because all mailings and materials had to be sent to all members of the sample group every time.

• It was possible that individuals may have returned the instrument from both the initial and second mailings.

• A few individuals called the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) to advise that they had already returned their first instrument when they received the follow-up instrument mailing. None of these individuals seemed aggravated by the multiple contacts, merely confused and anxious to respond properly. Assurances that the completely anonymous nature of the study precipitated the multiple contacts were accepted in each case.

In a single instance, a response to the second instrument mailing was clearly a photocopy of an instrument already received. The copy was eliminated from responses and only the original used.

As positive outcomes, the response rate was 52% (225 of 434) and many of the respondents appear to have been quite candid.

The sample was also selected with an eye to representation across the community college district. Distribution of actual respondents across the district was measured by self-reported location of respondents' principal residences. Results are described in Table 1 – Location of Respondents' Principal Residences as Indicator of Distribution. Starr County appears to be a bit over-represented and the Mid-Valley and McAllen - Mission - Edinburg areas a bit under-represented.

Results

Respondents

Table 1 – Location of Respondents' Principal Residence as Indicator of Distribution

Location of Residence	# of Respondents	% of Respondents	District Population Distribution (by %)
Starr County	35	16%	10%
Western Hidalgo County	11	5%	5%
McAllen - Edinburg - Mission	136	60%	65%
Mid-Valley	34	15%	20%
Missing	9	4%	0%

Grades

Average "grades" for items 1 through 13, ranged from 2.99 to 3.46, on a scale where
  A = 4.0
  B = 3.0
  C = 2.0
  D = 1.0
  F = 0.0
(A "N/A" response, with no value attached, was also available for respondents who felt they did not have sufficient knowledge of STCC's performance in a given area to evaluate it. These were eliminated from calculations for this report.)

On this range of grades, the average grade of every item fell between "B" and "B+" . Ranking Items 1 through 13, from highest to lowest average grade, yields Table 2 – Grades for Items 1 through 13. Table 2 also provides the percentage of respondents by grades: A and B (high), C (average), and D and F (low or failing). It is notable that no more than eight percent of respondents gave low or failing grades to any of the items of interest.

Table 2 – Grades for Items 1 through 13

Item Grades	n*	Mean Grade	%A&B	%C	%D&F
1. Provides affordable college tuition for students	198	3.46	94%	5%	2%
2. Increases opportunity to attend college close to home	198	3.46	94%	5%	2%
7. Provides college courses for qualified students while in high school	184	3.28	82%	15%	3%
9. Partners effectively with other organizations and institutions	187	3.26	80%	14%	6%
11. Provides a high return on taxpayers' investment	199	3.18	79%	15%	6%
12. Effectively manages multi-campus operation	175	3.18	82%	11%	6%
10. Demonstrates a high level of fiscal responsibility	180	3.16	78%	16%	6%
8. Provides workforce training for employers	192	3.13	79%	15%	6%
4. Prepares graduates to transfer to university for Bachelor's degree	195	3.10	77%	15%	7%
3. Prepares graduates for successful employment	204	3.09	78%	19%	4%
13. Provides a quality college experience for students	199	3.09	77%	15%	8%
5. Provides supportive environment to facilitate student success	186	3.09	80%	15%	5%
6. Further develops students' reading, writing and math skills	198	2.99	73%	20%	7%

*n = number of usable responses
Note: In Table 2, et seq., number (n) of responses may not equal 225 where missing or *N.A.* responses are omitted from this report.
Row percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Priorities

Respondents were also asked to identify the level of priority they would assign to each area asked about in the STCC Report Card Survey. Ranked in order of priority from highest (1st) to lowest (13th), respondents replied as follows. Review of mean scores for priority revealed that all thirteen items were from moderate to relatively high in priority to respondents.

Table 3 – Priority Ranking of Items 1 (Highest) through 13 (Lowest)

Rank	Item	# Responses (n)	Mean *	Within High to Moderate Range			% NA
				% High	% Medium	% Low	
1	2. Increases opportunity to attend college close to home	210	2.81	84%	14%	2%	0%
2	1. Provides affordable college tuition for students	208	2.79	83%	14%	2%	1%
3	3. Prepares graduates for successful employment	212	2.78	83%	15%	1%	1%
4	6. Further develops students' reading, writing, and math skills	209	2.68	75%	22%	1%	2%
5	4. Prepares graduates to transfer to university for Bachelor's degree	210	2.66	71%	24%	3%	1%
6	11. Provides a high return on taxpayers' investment	211	2.62	69%	26%	2%	2%
7	10. Demonstrates a high level of fiscal responsibility	208	2.56	69%	24%	2%	5%
8	13. Provides a quality college experience for students	212	2.50	62%	30%	5%	3%
9	8. Provides workforce training for employers	212	2.42	58%	30%	8%	4%
10	5. Provides supportive environment to facilitate student success	211	2.40	54%	37%	4%	5%
11	9. Partners effectively with other organizations and institutions	211	2.39	55%	35%	5%	5%
12	12. Effectively manages multi-campus operation	209	2.39	57%	33%	3%	7%
13	7. Provides college courses for qualified students while in high school	210	2.27	50%	31%	16%	3%

Note that the means* for Item Priorities are lower than those for Grades because they are based on a lower scale. The Priority scale is High = 3, Medium = 2, Low = 1, and NA = 0. Row percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   5

While the means for Priority appear to be little different, that should not be interpreted as meaning that respondents differed little in their relative priority for Items 1 through 13. Inspection of the distribution of their responses among the categories "High," "Medium" and "Low" shows distinctive differences between relatively higher or lower Priority scores, although all fall into the Moderate to High range of means.

Although Item 6 does not have the highest priority ranking, it is among the higher-ranked items in priority. However, this item had the lowest correlation between grade and priority among all of Items 1 through 13 ($r = .17$, $p < .001$). This finding reinforces the distinction between the findings of priority and grade reported in the foregoing tables. However, it should also be noted that the correlations between grade, a measure of satisfaction or quality, and priority, a measure of importance, for the other twelve items only fell between .32 and .51. These findings suggest that while responses for grade and priority tended to move in the same direction (e.g., Grades B+/Higher Priority) for every item there were a substantial number of respondents whose responses moved in opposite directions (e.g., Grades B+/Moderate Priority.)

Grade x Priority: Quadrant Analysis

It is not only important to know how community opinion leaders grade STCC on aspects of its work and the priority they assign to each aspect, but also to attempt to identify if STCC is perceived by them as doing a good job with the most important aspects of its work. That is the purpose of quadrant analysis.

In this analysis, Items 1 through 13 were divided into four quadrants by combination of grade and priority, where "higher" and "lower" were the defining factors. Four possibilities existed: Grades B+/Higher Priority, Grades B+/Moderate Priority, Grades B/Higher Priority, and Grades B/Moderate Priority. Figure 1 – Grade x Priority: Quadrant Analysis displays this graphically.

The Grades B+/Higher Priority quadrant contains items on which respondents report STCC performing an important function well. The themes reflected here appear to be accessibility of college through affordability and location, fiscal responsibility, and return on investment. These themes can probably be used successfully with virtually all audiences to bolster support for the college.

Items falling into the Grades B+/Moderate Priority quadrant reflect those the respondents perceived STCC as doing well, although not being particularly important to most respondents. The value of these in developing support for STCC is likely to be limited to particular constituencies.

Interestingly, items falling into the Lower Grades B/Moderate Priority quadrant are among those most valued by community college educators. Nevertheless, based on these results, speaking of an environment of support and quality in students' college experiences, or of workforce training for employers, appears unlikely to garner extensive positive perceptions of the college and its work unless these can be made a higher priority in constituents' minds.

Finally, the three items falling into the Grades B/Higher Priority quadrant appear to reflect many of the core tasks of the community college. Respondents viewed these as important areas in which STCC performs less well. While it is important to note that these ratings reflect respondents' perceptions of reality, rather than necessarily accurately reflecting the *actual* quality of these functions, perception *is* reality for those who hold it. It may be important for STCC to very overtly address these perceptions.

Figure 1 – Grade x Priority Quadrant Analysis

Priority

		Higher	Moderate
B+		1. Provides affordable college tuition for students 2. Increases opportunity to attend college close to home 10. Demonstrates a high level of fiscal responsibility 11. Provides a high return on taxpayer's investment	7. Provides college courses for qualified students while in high school 9. Partners effectively with other organizations and institutions 12. Effectively manages multi-campus operation
Grade		3. Prepares graduates for successful employment 4. Prepares graduates for transfer to university for Bachelor's degree 6. Further develops students' reading, writing and math skills	5. Provides supportive environment to facilitate student success 8. Provides workforce training for employers 13. Provides a quality college experience for students
B			

While quadrant analysis seems to separate Items on the basis of grade x priority, factor analysis did not yield any other identifiable dimensions around which to group Items 1 through 13.

Items 14, 15 and 16

Items 14, 15 and 16 were structured, yet open-ended, items calling for brief responses. Item 14 read, *"The two or three words that best describe STCC to me include. . ."* with three underlined spaces following to suggest identification of a few specific descriptors. The complete transcription of responses to Item 14 is available as Appendix B. The responses range from a single descriptor, through three descriptive words, to complete sentences neatly divided into three sections to fit into the spaces provided on the instrument.

Content analysis of responses to Item 14, using both analytical software and inspection, identified three "themes" or subjects of comment as being most common responses. These were:

1. STCC provides Ease of Access to postsecondary/higher education = 26% of all responses to Item 14 (where "access" includes both financial access and convenient physical access.)

"Ease of access" here involved language describing proximity, affordability, location/local, availability, and convenience. This theme reflects inclusion of items concerning affordability and opportunity to attend

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   7

college close to home in the Grades B+/Higher Priority Quadrant of the Grade x Priority Figure. These two findings tend to support the importance of access, in all its manifestations, for the respondents.

2. STCC <u>Provides Service/Shows Quality</u> = 15% of all responses to Item 14.

Terms denoting service or quality involved language describing value/valuable, quality, excellence, useful/effective, meets need(s), progressive, good/better/best/great, progressive/vision, or caring/helpful. Although Items concerning these themes fell into the Grades B/Moderate Priority Quadrant, they pose the second most common theme in responses to Item 14, "words that best describe STCC." This appears to suggest that some respondents tend to associate STCC closely with lower priority, lower performance areas. It may indicate that "quality," however defined by the respondent, is not tightly associated with areas described by Item 1 through 13.

3. STCC provides <u>Opportunity</u> = 5% of all responses to Item 14.

Terms describing opportunity include those involving "opens doors, " "stepping stones," "stepladders," and "bridges" as well as "opportunity" itself. Arguably, "opportunity" may also be encompassed in Theme 1, access, if ease of financial and physical access are considered parts of opportunity to attend college. However, in Theme 3, "opportunity" seems more closely aligned with a notion of students being able to move from one less desirable educational, economic, or employment status to one that is more desirable from the perspective of respondents.

Although these three general areas of comment represent the most common responses and those that aggregate best into thematic areas, they each represent a rather small percentage of total responses. The fact that well over half of all responses could not be classified or thematically grouped in any quantity equal to or greater than 5% suggests how varied the descriptors provided were.

The overall tone of comments in Item 14 is summarized in Table 4 – Tone of Responses to Item 14.

Table 4 – Tone of Responses to Item 14

Tone of Comment	# Comments	% of Total #
Positive	416	92%
Neutral	19	4%
Negative	19	4%

Item 15 was a sentence-completion item: *"In my opinion, the best thing about STCC is. . ."* The full transcriptions of responses to Item 15 are found in Appendix C. Interestingly, some respondents identified more than one *"best"* thing about STCC.

Content analysis of responses to Item 15, using both analytical software and inspection, identified several "themes" or subjects of comment as being most common responses. These included :

Access =   61% of all responses to Item 15
Opportunity =   50% of all responses to Item 15
Quality =   20% of all responses to Item 15
Employment =   5% of all responses to Item 15
[Negative comments]= 4% of all responses to Item 15

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   8

Percentages do not sum to 100% because some respondents included more than 1 *best* thing. Missing comments were not included in calculations. A small number of comments were single instances and not included in any of the above classifications.

While both the number and percentage of negative comments to Item 15 were small, it may be worth noting that the *best* thing about STCC, in a few respondents' opinions, was something negative. An example of such a comment is, "Keeps them [students] off the streets." The overall tone of comments in Item 15 is summarized in Table 5 – Tone of Responses to Item 15. Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 5 – Tone of Responses to Item 15

Tone of Comment	# Comments	% of Total #
Positive	170	93%
Neutral	4	2%
Negative	8	4%

Item 16 also was a sentence-completion item, *"If I could change only one specific thing about STCC, it would be. . ."* The full transcriptions of responses to Item 16 are found in Appendix D. Some respondents identified more than one thing about STCC they would like to change.

Content analysis of responses to Item 16, using both analytical software and inspection, identified several "themes" or subjects of comment as being most common responses. These included issues relating to:

Funding =	52% (generally expressed as a need for more funding)
Facilities =	25% (expressed as a need for more and/or better)
Instructional Quality =	19% (both pro and con)
Curriculum =	19% (expressed as need for particular areas or emphases)
Student-related =	12% (discussions of student quality, readiness for college, and needs)
Remediation-related =	10% (generally, concerns about the role of the college *vis-á-vis* K - 12 education)
Student Services =	10% (need for more, different services)
Growth =	9% (both pro and con)
Administration/Management =	9% (varied comments about administrative issues)
Location =	6% (both pro and con multiple sites or additional sites)
Workforce Development =	5% (both pro and con emphasis on workforce development)
Other =	1%

Again, percentages do not sum to 100% because some respondents listed more than one concern and because some of the statements related to more than one issue.

Among these themes there are some identifiable relationships with Items 1 through 13 and their location in the Grade x Priority Quadrants. Funding, facilities, growth, administration/management and location are all related to the Items in the Grades B+/Higher Priority Quadrant. Quality, student services and workforce development all fall into the Grades B/Moderate Priority Quadrant.

The overall tone of comments in Item 16 is summarized in Table 6 – Tone of Responses to Item 16. The negative tone of half of these was not unexpected, given the wording of the item, *"If I could change only one specific thing about STCC, it would be. . ."* It is worth noting that nearly as many of the responses were neutral or positive in tone, given the nature of the item.

Table 6 – Tone of Responses to Item 16

Tone of Comment	# Comments	% of Total #
Positive	10	6%
Neutral	67	43%
Negative	78	50%

Open-Ended Comments from Back Page of Instrument

Forty-one (18%) of the respondents included hand-written comments. These are included as Appendix E. In the Appendix comments are transcribed as written, except that any identifying information (e.g., names and titles) have been removed to assure the anonymous nature of the responses. The most common theme among the comments was congratulations to STCC on a **job well done** (22 of 41, 54 %) followed by references to **students** as a group (13 of 41, 32%). The third most common set of comments or references (8 of 41, 20%) was to **K-12 public education**. Comments dealing with the **opportunity** provided by STCC and **remedial (i.e., developmental) education** were tied at 7 references (17% of 41) each, along with comments about **growth**. A surprising number of comments (5 of 41, or 12%) – given that survey recipients were culled from a list to whom STCC regularly sends information and invitations – were statements that the respondent was generally **unaware** of STCC and its programs.

Because some of the 41 respondents commented on more than one area, or both favorably and unfavorably about various areas of the college, the total number of comments was 74. Dividing these generally by "tone" (positive, negative, or neutral), yields the results summarized in Table 7 – Tone of Open-Ended Comments from Back Page of Instrument.

Table 7 – Tone of Open-Ended Comments from Back Page of Instrument

Tone of Comment	# Comments	% of Total #
Positive	35	47%
Neutral	12	16%
Negative	27	36%

While many of the written comments were positive, some respondents also took this opportunity to state concerns or criticisms, or simply to make recommendations about the future course of the college that were neither positive or negative in tone.

Conclusions and Discussion

Grades

Respondents generally graded STCC as better than average on the first thirteen items, with grades falling between B and B+. This appears to reflect a perception among respondents that STCC is doing a solid – if not perfect – job in these areas. Knowing how community opinion leaders assess the College's standing in these areas in Spring 2001 provides baseline knowledge against which to measure future improvement.

The two highest graded items, tied at 3.46, or about a B+, were those addressing o*pportunity to attend college close to home* and *affordable college tuition.* These themes appear to be closely related and recur throughout the results of this study. They appear to reflect a strong appreciation of the work STCC has done to make postsecondary learning opportunities accessible to the people of Hidalgo and Starr Counties.

The third and fourth most highly graded items, a near tie with mean scores of 3.28 and 3.26 each, were *provision of college courses for high school students* and *partnerships with other organizations and institutions.* These appear to be related as "partnering" activities.

The fourth, fifth and sixth most highly graded items, at 3.18 to 3.16 or about solid B average scores, are a combination that suggest the relationship of management and fiscal issues. These dealt with *management of a multi-campus system, return on taxpayer investment,* and *fiscal responsibility.*

The six lowest graded items all revolve around students' learning experiences at STCC and their outcomes. While an average grade of B on these items is certainly indicative of a fairly high perception of quality, it may be of concern that the core educational responsibilities of the College – those associated with development of college students as learners, employees, and as individuals – are graded lower by significant community leaders responding to this survey. These perceptions should be vigorously addressed.

Priorities

Notably, the two items ranked as having the highest priority, based on mean ranking across all respondents providing a ranking score, were the same two graded most highly:
*   *opportunity to attend college close to home*
*   *affordable college tuition*
The third most highly ranked item – *preparation of graduates for successful employment* – was also a virtual tie with the top two items. These three items seem to reflect a very practical valuing of priorities for STCC, in that respondents want students to have ready access to a college learning experience that allows them to gain meaningful employment at the conclusion of their program. These responses, taken together, suggest a very localized focus for the most important roles of STCC.

It is worth noting, however, that *provision of workplace training for employers* (9th of 13) is a much lower priority for respondents than *preparation of graduates for successful employment* (3rd of 13). This may reflect a clear differentiation in valuing between provision of services to students and provision of services to employers or between the value of the types of employment to which the two sorts of training lead. It is not possible to distinguish from this study which of the two alternative explanations applies, or whether some other applies instead. Nevertheless, if the distinction is reflective of some strongly held set of priorities, further investigation may be warranted and follow-up required. Public relations and marketing efforts may be important in helping the public distinguish between the two.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   11

It may be of consequence that the most highly ranked priorities dealing with student learning were fifth (*development of reading, writing and math skills*) and sixth (*preparation for transfer for a Bachelor's degree*). Their ranking is very similar to two items dealing with fiscal and administrative issues: *return on taxpayer investment* and *fiscal responsibility*. These four items form a middle tier among the thirteen in terms of prioritization. Their relationships to one another, if any, are not clear from the results of this study.

The lowest priority six items are a mixed bag. Two – *provides a quality college experience for students* and *provides a supportive environment to facilitate student success* – appear to be related. These are often voiced within STCC as being important functions of the College, yet quality and student support do not appear to be as important to its external constituencies if these respondents do indeed represent them accurately.

Workforce training for employers, effective partnering, and *management of multi-campus operations* also fall among items reported as having lowest priority. However, the lowest priority with a significant (p <.001) difference in mean score was *provision of college courses to students while in high school*. The low ranking of these items may require further exploration to determine whether respondents truly find them relatively unimportant or are simply uninformed about their importance.

The most notable challenge in reconciling responses to grade and ranking may lie in Item 6 – *further develops students' reading, writing, and math skills*. Item 6 was fairly highly ranked in priority and yet received the lowest grade, barely a B. An interpretation issue may be involved, in that Item 6 was developed with an eye to developmental education but reworded cautiously after much discussion among the administrative staff of the College. It cannot be determined whether respondents recognized Item 6 as a veiled reference to developmental/remedial education, or whether they assumed that it refers to all students' basic academic skills. While a low grade for either interpretation would be troubling, an inference that respondents find that all STCC students have inadequate reading, writing or math skills would be more distressing in some ways than an assumption that they found developmental students' progress lacking. This area will probably require follow-up.

Finally, both inspection of returned instruments and statistical analyses of the data themselves indicate that level of agreement among respondents for grade or priority of any of Items 1 through 13 varied considerably. While grades and priorities tended to track one another in each item response and tended to be positive, no item had universal highly positive grade and priority. For every item, between two percent and eight percent of grade responses "failed" STCC. For every item, between two percent and sixteen percent of all respondents ranked it as low priority. There was no identifiable pattern among responses that would account for these differences.

Grade x Priority: Quadrant Analysis

Review of Items 1 through 13 through Quadrant Analysis is revealing. The Grades B+/Higher Priority Quadrant reinforces the relative importance of access to higher education provided by STCC through low cost and location. These, taken with fiscal responsibility and return on taxpayer investment, are likely to resonate positively with virtually any Community College District constituency.

Selective discussion of partnering with other organizations and institutions, including area high schools, may be effective messages with particular constituencies. Where these can be tied to discussions of access and opportunity and/or savings for the taxpayers, they are more likely to be accepted as important contributions or activities and more broadly supported.

The greatest area of concern is with the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant. These are functions of the Community College that respondents valued highly but view STCC as doing less well. They are also core

educational functions of the college and likely to be the long-term measures of success. This suggests a two-pronged action from STCC to address these perceptions of low performance on important issues:
* Determine whether the college truly is performing as well in these areas as it should be. If not, improve performance.
* Publicly and actively address negative perceptions with evidence of success and success stories.

The items falling into the Grades B/Moderate Priority Quadrant include two that facilitate successful completion of the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant: *supportive environment to support student success* and *quality college experience*. A campaign to develop awareness of the importance of these to the highly valued, but poorly rated, Items in the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant might develop external support for *an environment to support student success* and *quality college experience* and help explain the lower grades in the high priority items. They may also be important as campaign issues for resource development in the near future.

Content Analyses

While Access and Opportunity recur as themes throughout the findings, these are related to facilities and location, relative inexpensiveness of attending STCC, and availability of courses and programming across the District. There appears to be less concern about instructional quality, excellence of program of study, or distinction of STCC as an institution noted for academic excellence, as long as STCC satisfices in preparing students adequately for employment or transfer to a four-year institution.

Remediation, quality of students, and opportunity appear to be inextricably intertwined. There is appreciation for the role of STCC in providing access to higher education that was not available to the mass of residents in Starr and Hidalgo Counties prior to the community college's founding. There are a number of comments addressing the value of STCC for students who are financially or physically unable to go away to college, even so far as UT-PanAmerican. However, there are about as many comments regarding students who are educationally unprepared to enter college. Some of these reflect appreciation that STCC provides an alternative route to higher education; however, some also reflect a sense that STCC is less-than-a-college – through its provision of developmental/remedial studies, because vocational or technical programming is not viewed as "collegiate," or because community colleges are somehow viewed as "bridging" between high school and "real" college (i.e., four-year colleges and universities.) Although respondents clearly are aware of STCC's academic transfer role, there seems to be a pervasive perception that many community college students aren't really "college material."

Commendations of STCC were common in the open comments. Too often, however, respondents seem to suggest that STCC does a good job, *for what it is* – which is less than a "real" college (i.e., four-year institution.) This may reflect the background of respondents to a considerable extent, as it seems likely that these leaders themselves are more likely to have attended four-year colleges and universities, professional schools, and graduate schools than to have been graduates of community or vocational/technical colleges. Unfortunately, this perception of community colleges is common and STCC must take the leadership role in addressing it in Hidalgo and Starr Counties.

Recommendations

It would have been most unexpected for this study to indicate that STCC is perfect in all respects. The quest for continuous quality improvement is ingrained in the STCC culture and there is clearly room for improvement in the eyes of the respondents to this study. STCC will need to consider these findings and address them.

This study, however, could be likened to a mirror-image: the reflection is generally accurate, but allowances have to be made for the facts that left and right are reversed, distance from the mirror is doubled, and imperfections or missing reflective areas in the mirroring may cause distortions. So, one might ask, what is the point of looking in the mirror? The answer to that question is that the reflection is generally accurate and a good guide for improvement, keeping in mind the limitations of the mirror's image. Even if the mirror isn't perfect, the reflected image can still be very helpful in combing one's hair, straightening the tie, and going about one's business in better shape and more presentably. The mirror image is a reality-check, even when it doesn't reflect reality perfectly.

The College will need to take some care to determine whether some things are truly not working as well as intended, whether some are simply perceived as not working as well as respondents expect, or whether they are neither working nor perceived well. Conversely, perceptions of high levels of success may also be distorted and STCC should check them as well. The most immediate responses, however, probably should be to the most problematic areas and to those that can be quickly resolved.

The most important **general recommendation** about this study is that care should be taken not to overreact in either of two directions: to assume that criticisms expressed by respondents accurately reflect weaknesses at STCC and take immediate, drastic action for change or to assume that all responses reflect only erroneous perceptions of respondents and it is the perceptions or the College's image that need to be addressed. Either approach, by itself or carried to extremes, is likely to be wrong.

Specific Recommendations

1.   The almost inverse relationship of grade and priority with respect to development of *students' reading, writing and math skills* requires further investigation.

> OIRE will undertake to learn more about how Item 6 was interpreted, to see if that helps understand the responses.

> It would be well if Public Relations and Marketing could publicize the successes of Developmental Studies in these areas and to disseminate highly persuasive information about the College's success in developing these skills in all students. The Employer Follow-Up Survey is routinely highly complimentary about students' skills in these areas and might be a source for support of the College's work.

> Transfer success is another area routinely reported by OIRE (Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness) that suggests whether students are adequately prepared for upper division work and writing and math.

> Advisory committees might also be a good source for feedback on the adequacy of STCC's basic skills development in content- or job-specific areas.

> Advisory committees or similar focus groups would probably also be a good source of information about the necessary communications and math competencies required for

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   14

graduates of STCC's programs to be successfully employed or successfully continue their educations at a higher level.

Curricula and master syllabi should be examined in light of these recommendations to determine whether the identified competencies and levels are clearly designed into each curriculum.

Consideration might be given to evaluations of both whether the competencies are being taught at the desired levels and level of emphasis and whether students are indeed mastering them as desired prior to graduation or exit from a course or course sequence.

2.   The relationships between *opportunity* and the physical and financial *accessibility* of STCC for students (and potential students) probably cannot be overplayed as important to the people of Starr and Hidalgo Counties.

"The Community's (or, Communities') College" theme resonates.

Public Relations and Marketing and all representatives of the College probably want to constantly place the financial and physical accessibility of the College in the public consciousness.

Concrete, local success stories about the opportunities students have realized as a result of attending STCC should be told at every opportunity and made a part of not only institutional culture but the mythology of the two-county area. These probably should focus on very practical successes (e.g., "mother of two qualifies as nurse and first job pays $XXK per year," young truck driver sees the U.S. and buys own $250K rig," webmaster students recruited before graduation.")

Significant parties to students' decisions about attending STCC should be made highly aware of the opportunities and advantages available through STCC. These might include ease of entry, relative inexpensiveness of STCC, and physical proximity of STCC's campuses and sites. As importantly, STCC needs to improve knowledge of the alternate routes available through a community college education (transfer education, vocational/technical education, workforce training) and of the very desirable nature of vocational/technical education and workforce training for many students or potential students. Obtaining the baccalaureate is often viewed as being the most legitimate outcome of college attendance, while technical and vocational careers may not be viewed as equally desirable outcomes on the part of those who influence students (e.g., high school counselors and teachers, parents, employers, others.) This requires direct, positive and ongoing attention from STCC.

STCC should make every reasonable effort to ensure that students throughout the District can access the full range of opportunities available through the College at a site near their homes or in their homes. The ACTSOS findings (reported Summer 2000) clearly revealed that most students could/would not travel more than about 20 minutes to attend STCC. As the population of the two-county area increases, the College will need to continually work at meeting needs where students are through strategically located sites and/or through distance learning.

Financial accessibility is likely to continue to be important. Recent discussions within STCC about tuition should be reviewed in light of these findings. Any increase in tuition or fees should be carefully managed, with an eye to presenting a strong case for increases

(perhaps as an alternative to tax increases) as well as to avoiding potential unintended consequences (e.g., decreased headcount or contact hour generation.)

Financial aid will continue to be important in decisions to attend. STCC should make information about and access to financial aid as readily available as possible. This might involve keeping availability of financial aid, and the amount of total expense of attending STCC it covers, very high in the student and public awareness. The process of applying for, obtaining and using financial assistance to attend STCC should be as streamlined and intuitive as possible for students, while safeguarding all legal and financial requirements. Are there alternative sources of financial assistance for students that might be available?

3.	The *academic* accessibility of STCC continues to be a two-edged sword. The College's position of maintaining a near-open-door enrollment policy has the strength of providing access and opportunity to individuals who might not otherwise attend college – especially when coupled with the financial and physical accessibility of STCC. The downside of this is increasing access by students who are marginally or not academically prepared for or acculturated to college attendance (for example, those graduating from high school in the lowest quartiles of their graduating class and/or not having taken the college preparatory curriculum in high school.) STCC's acceptance of marginally ready or virtually unready students lends to the perceptions that the College is of lesser quality than a four-year institution, even in its lower division, and not a *true* college. The proportion of students in developmental/remedial education tends to be overstated by respondents and questions raised about the desirability of managing basic skills development at the college, or even pre-college, level, when they should have been mastered prior to coming to college.

Access with true opportunity for success is the goal. This may have several implications for STCC:

Students admitted into the College requiring developmental education must succeed in exiting developmental education in reasonable proportion to their number.

Students admitted with developmental education requirements must receive adequate financial aid and academic advising to ensure they understand the implications of their status in terms of time required to complete a program of study, legal restrictions on hours accumulated in developmental studies, and restrictions on course taking due to pre-requisites.

Students unlikely to succeed in developmental education should be advised and counseled to elect majors that do not require college levels of reading, writing, or math (as appropriate.) Aptitude and interest testing and career selection assistance may be critical components of this process.

Students whose assessed basic skills level are below those that STCC can demonstrate ability to remediate should be advised to engage in adult basic education to raise their skill levels to a minimum threshold prior to enrolling at STCC.

STCC will need to identify the minimum threshold likely to lead to success in developmental studies areas.

Students who come to college ill-prepared for their collegiate experiences, whether through inadequate academic development or nonacculturation to college, are unlikely to be successful proportionately to those who are adequately or well prepared. In addition to developmental education, STCC should provide adequate support to students in becoming acculturated to college. This may include such programs as mandatory orientation and college success courses or programs. If STCC chooses to provide such supports, students, those who influence their decisions, and the communities the College serves should be made very aware of the programs, their value to students and the communities, and of their success stories.

If the results of developmental education and orientation/college success programs at STCC are such that they exceed those of other colleges or are considered a success, then the District needs to be made aware that near-open-door access leads to true opportunities for success.

When STCC can demonstrate with a fair degree of certainty what is necessary in both basic skills and acculturation to college to engage in college-level course work directly and successfully, it should export that knowledge to high schools, workforce development agencies, and other interested parties for them to use with potential students and help them to see it as their responsibility to assist students develop those skills and knowledge prior to coming to college.

4.   There appears to be a dichotomy of roles – academic transfer and vocational/technical preparation for employment – that many respondents do not accept or cannot integrate in their understanding of what a community college is or should be. This seems to reflect academic accessibility as an issue. The strongest reflection of this lies in comments suggesting that students admitted to STCC should be seeking, or well-qualified to seek, the baccalaureate degree. However, the mirror image of this perception lies in the comments implying that STCC exists to serve those students unqualified for "regular" college admission or seeking the baccalaureate, but instead need vocational training to prepare them to work in the two-county area. Only one comment among all those received noted that STCC should do both transfer and vocational education.

STCC needs to improve awareness of and knowledge about the alternate routes available through a community college education (transfer education, vocational/technical education, workforce training) and of the very desirable nature of vocational/technical education and workforce training for many students or potential students. Bias toward the baccalaureate as being the most legitimate outcome of college attendance, combined perhaps with biases against other levels of postsecondary educational development, on the part of those who influence students (e.g., high school counselors and teachers, parents, employers, others) requires direct, positive and ongoing attention from STCC.

STCC's successes in both transfer and vocational/technical education should receive equal billing and frequent renewal with both the general public and the specific constituencies needing to hear both stories.

5.   The Items falling into the two Grades B Quadrants may be of particular importance to both STCC's image and actual success. Those in the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant reflect the key tasks of the College: *preparation for successful employment, preparation for transfer to baccalaureate granting institutions,* and *develop of reading, writing and math skills.* Two of those

falling into the Grades B/Moderate Priority Quadrant – *supportive environment to facilitate student success* and *provides a quality college experience for students* – are considered by most within the College and by most in higher education to be critical factors in influencing students' success in the three items in the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant. It is important for the College to assure itself and its constituents that it is doing an excellent job with the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant items and to demonstrate how the two in the Grades B/Moderate Priority Quadrant are not only essential to student outcomes, but also done very well at STCC.

Does STCC succeed in preparing students for transfer or work? Are students' reading, writing and math skills at acceptable levels? How would we know? What are the standards for "success"? Are there multiple standards and, if so, which is highest or most important? The answers to these questions are needed to respond to the Grades B/Higher Priority Quadrant items.

OIRE prepares reports of employment success on an annual basis and reports of transfer success to UT-PanAmerican following every long semester. While the Employer and Graduate Follow-Up Reports indicate that technical graduates are finding employment in their field and their employers are very satisfied with their job specific and general communication and math skills, the studies on which these reports are based always have very moderate response rates. Possible reasons for this include:

- Graduates no longer living at their last college mailing address may not be receiving their correspondence from OIRE

- There is no advantage to the graduate in responding and no disadvantage for choosing not to respond

- Graduates who choose to respond *may* be those who have been successful in seeking and maintaining employment, rather than those who have not and might be embarrassed to respond

- OIRE can only identify employers through graduates' responses and may only contact those for whom graduates have given permission in their response

- It is *possible* that graduates tend only to give permission to contact their employers if they feel they will not be given a negative report

- There is no advantage to the employer in responding and no disadvantage for choosing not to respond

This list of *caveats* leads to uncertainty about the value of the Graduate and Employer Follow-Up Studies as indicators for *successful preparation for employment*. OIRE should explore obtaining better information about these concerns. If concerns are accurate, the method of data development needs to be improved. If they are not accurate, that information needs to be disseminated and the College needs to use these studies to bolster public perception of the quality of *preparation for employment*.

Transfer success at UT-PanAmerican, the institution to which about 85% of STCC's transfer students have historically gone, is reported after each long semester. While overall STCC's transfers to UTPA tend to do about as well by the end of their second

semester after transfer as all other undergraduate students at UTPA, there are pockets of persistent nonsuccess that need to be addressed.

There is little information available about the success of students who transfer to institutions other than UTPA. OIRE should develop means for identifying and tracking those students to obtain feedback about their transfer success.

What standards are appropriate for transfer success? STCC has used comparison of term G.P.A. and mean grade in a few targeted courses after transfer as proxies for transfer success. Are these the most useful? Is equivalency of STCC's transfer students with other undergraduates sufficient, or should STCC strive to exceed equivalency if the receiving institution's own standards are lower than those of the most highly respected public four-year colleges and universities in Texas? There are no immediately and obviously correct answers to questions like these.

Development of reading, writing and math skills was addressed above in 1.

There is a substantial body of literature regarding the value of supportive environments and quality college experiences to students' success in college, whether measured by transfer success, employability, or development of basic communication and math skills. Best practices for supporting learning, integrating students into the college community, and developing acculturation to college are widely available through this literature and subjects of conference presentations. Review of best practices, implementation of them at STCC, tracking and reporting of results, and continued work on quality improvement should go far in improving student outcomes.

The general public tends to focus on the core educational tasks of higher education and, thus, views work and resources going into support areas as being the "frills" on a college education. This may account for the lower priority given these items by respondents, despite their importance to student outcomes. Professionals in Student Support Services and faculty and administrators in Instructional Services may need to work together and with Public Relations and Marketing to increase the public perception of the value of student support areas and to generate support for use of resources in them. Improvements in this area are likely to pay off in higher grades for the Grades B/Higher Priority items, which are among the most important for STCC's long term success.

6.   The extent to which critical outcomes and the support necessary to cause them to occur require adequate funding and facilities appears to be recognized. STCC's ability to be fiscally responsible is important and well-managed, according to this study. Nevertheless, while there were many responses suggesting that STCC needed to do this, that or the other thing requiring additional funding, there is also a NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) attitude evident when it comes to paying taxes to support expectations.

Strongly compelling, local and practical evidence of the pay-off to the people of Hidalgo and Starr Counties and the communities in which they live is probably the best way to overcome the NIMBY syndrome when it comes to local revenue development. (See discussion of "mythology" in 2., above.)

Several comments specifically noted that "the State" should provide more money to STCC. STCC might forward these comments to local representatives to the Legislature with requests for support for higher education in this area or to STCC quite specifically.

Alternatively, STCC might wish to engage in an educational campaign in the two counties on the sources of funding for community colleges, this one in particular. Given the strong local engagement with *opportunity* through *accessibility* at STCC, this might help in deciding among tuition and fee increases, a tax increase, and a bond issue as the most acceptable way(s) to provide students with access to opportunity.

Like most studies in higher education, this one has created about as many new questions as there are answers provided to original questions. Continuing to investigate the questions while using the answers for immediate improvements are parts of the continuous quality improvement process, to which STCC is committed.

Appendix A:

Instrumentation

⬩STCC
South Texas Community College

Office of the President
3201 W. Pecan Blvd. • McAllen, Texas 78501

Executive Director
Any Company
5555 Any Street
McAllen, TX 78501

Dear :

As one of the Valley's highly respected leaders, I am asking that you please take a few minutes to grade the performance of STCC over the past seven years. In the next few days you will receive a survey asking you to grade STCC. I would appreciate your taking a few minutes from your busy schedule to complete the survey. You were selected because I very much value your opinion and because I believe you possess a strong understanding of the Valley's needs.

Your responses will be completely anonymous, so feel free to be candid. Your feedback means a lot to us, so please fill out our "Report Card" as soon as you receive it and send it right back to us. We'll be waiting anxiously!

Since the day the College opened, STCC's entire faculty and staff have worked very hard to provide the highest quality and most accessible and affordable educational opportunities to everyone in Hidalgo and Starr Counties. We are committed to these goals and now we would like to know how we are doing.

Sincerely,

Shirley A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D.
President

▲STCC

South Texas Community College

P.O. Box 9701
McAllen, TX 78502-9701

Office of the President
3201 W. Pecan Blvd. • McAllen, Texas 78501

(956) 618-8366
Fax: (956) 618-8368

Here is your chance to grade STCC!

Mr. John Doe
Executive Director
Any Company
5555 Any Street
McAllen, TX 78501

Dear Mr. Doe:

Enclosed is your copy of the STCC Report Card that I wrote you about a few days ago. As I mentioned then, everyone at STCC is committed to providing the highest quality education and services, and we are asking you to grade the College's performance over the past seven years.

The enclosed Report Card explores your opinions about how well STCC is performing its major functions, and gives you the opportunity to tell us what you think we are doing well and what we should improve. Your perspective, as a leader in your field and community, can tell us which programs and services must be improved to ensure that our students receive the best possible service and education.

As you can see, we do not ask for your name or any identifying information. Your response is completely anonymous, and the information you supply can never be linked to you in any way. Please feel free to be completely candid.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact me or Dr. Gail Dantzker at (956) 688-2308. We will be happy to discuss the survey with you.

Thank you for your participation in this important study. I appreciate your cooperation and value your feedback.

Sincerely,

Shirley A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D.
President

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   23

STCC

South Texas Community College

P.O. Box 9701
McAllen, TX 78502-9701

Office of the President
3201 W. Pecan Blvd. • McAllen, Texas 78501

(956) 618-8366
Fax: (956) 618-8368

Just a reminder: We want you to grade STCC!

Mr. John Doe
Executive Director
Any Company
5555 Any Street
McAllen, TX 78501

Dear Mr. Doe:

A few days have passed since I mailed you the STCC 2000 – 01 Report Card, and I wanted to tell you again how important your response is to us. **If you have already completed and returned the survey, please accept my thanks for your participation.**

If you have not returned the survey, won't you please take the few moments necessary to complete it now? Your feedback is crucial, if we are to learn how to better meet the needs of our students and our communities.

Let me also remind you that your response is anonymous, which guarantees that the information you supply will never be linked to you. Your honest opinion is extremely important to us.

If you have any questions or need another copy of the report card, please contact me or Dr. Gail Dantzker at (956) 688-2308. We will be happy to send you another copy or discuss any questions you may have.

Again, if you have already returned your report card, thank you for your time and consideration. If not, won't you take 5 – 10 minutes to complete it now? Your input is essential.

Sincerely,

Shirely A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D.
President

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   24

▲STCC
South Texas Community College

P.O. Box 9701
McAllen, TX 78502-9701

Office of the President
3201 W. Pecan Blvd. • McAllen, Texas 78501

(956) 618-8366
Fax: (956) 618-8368

Don't pass up your chance to grade STCC!

Mr. John Doe
Executive Director
Any Company
5555 Any Street
McAllen, TX 78501

Dear Mr. Doe:

About two weeks have passed since I mailed you the STCC 2000 – 01 report card and asked you to grade STCC. I must tabulate the results soon and want to be certain we have received all our grades before I finish my report. Your input is very important to us.

Because all the responses are completely anonymous, I can't tell if you have returned your Report Card or not. **If you have already returned your Report Card, please accept my thanks for your participation.** We value your input and give thoughtful attention to it.

If you have not already returned our Report Card, I want to make it as convenient as possible for you to grade us. Therefore, I have included another copy of the Report Card and a postage-paid, addressed, return envelope for your convenience in responding. **Please take 5-10 minutes now to grade STCC and put this back into the mail.**

Your participation is very important to us. Information form community leaders like you plays an important role in guiding STCC's provision of needed programs and services for our students and our communities. The few minutes of your time invested in this Report Card can help make differences in the future of Hidalgo and Starr Counties as STCC plans for the next decade's work.

If you have any questions or concerns about this Report Card, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Gail Dantzker at (956) 688-2308. Either of us will be happy to discuss the Report Card with you.

Sincerely,

Shirely A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D.
President

Division of Information and Technology Services   25

▲STCC
South Texas Community College

South Texas Community College
2000 - 01 Report Card

Please fill out our Report Card! STCC is dedicated to meeting the educational needs of Hidalgo and Starr Counties, and we want to know how well you think we are doing.

This survey is anonymous. Please do not add any identifying information.

You may use either pencil or ink to complete this form. To respond please completely fill ovals like this: ●
To change an answer, erase or cross out the undesired response .

On the left, please fill the oval under the grade you would give for each function. If you have no opinion about one of the functions, mark "N.A."

Fill the oval that shows how high a priority you think STCC should give to each function. If you do not have an opinion about a function's priority, mark "N.A."

STCC's Grades						List of Functions	Level of Priority			
A	B	C	D	F	N.A.		High	Mid	Low	N.A.
O	O	O	O	O	O	1. Provides affordable college tuition for students	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	2. Increases opportunity to attend college close to home	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	3. Prepares graduates for successful employment	O	O.	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	4. Prepares graduates to transfer to university for Bachelor's degree	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	5. Provides supportive environment to facilitate student success	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	6. Further develops student's reading, writing and math skills	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	7. Provides college courses for qualified students while in high school	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	8. Provides workforce training for employers	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	9. Partners effectively with other organizations and institutions	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	10. Demonstrates a high level of fiscal responsibility	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	11. Provides a high return on taxpayers' investment	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	12. Efectively manages multi-campus operation	O	O	O	O
O	O	O	O	O	O	13. Provides a quality college experience for students	O	O	O	O

14. The two or three words that best describe South Texas Community College for me include:

_____   _____   _____

15. The best thing about STCC is . . .

_____

16. If I could change one specific thing about STCC, it would be . . .

_____

17. My principal residence is in or nearest to:

O Starr County   O Western Hidalgo County   O Mid-Valley   O McAllen-Edinburg-Mission area

Thank you for your valued participation! Please write any additional comments on the back of this page.

26

ERIC

Please write any comments you would like in the space below.

If you would like to comment specifically on any of the items on the front, please write the number of the item (1-16) in front of your comments so we can be sure of correctly connecting your response to the item.

Appendix B:

Responses to Item 14

32

Responses to Item 14

14A	14B	14C
opportunity	lower income	move forward
convenient	somewhat affordable	state accredited
close by	helpful staff/friendly	great professors
opportunity	outreach	employment
opportunity	sprawling	too rapid growth
relevant	local	missing
training	job skills	rapid growth
quality	variety	location
accessible	opportunity	missing
relevant	local	missing
effective	accessible	missing
preparation	unique	quality
opportunity	success	missing
good	for	nothing
affordable	accessible	missing
works fine despite a mediocre administration & fair-poor governing body	missing	missing
opportunity	empowerment	affordable education
affordable	accessible	flexible
affordable	local	student-friendly
excellent	missing	missing
gives everyone an opportunity	missing	missing
beneficial	convenient	affordable

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   29

14A	14B	14C
opportunity	convenient	potential
affordability	availability	proximity
accessible	challenged	crowded
useful	available	affordable
it is	a great	learning environment
learning	for the	market place
friendly	affordable	proximity & stepping stone to a four year university
affordable	classes close to attend	we have both vocational and College courses
affordable	convenient	missing
concurrent enrollment	caring professors	missing
local	continuing education	missing
affordable	convenient	friendly
opportunity	diverse programs	affordable
available	starts	important
location	affordable	opportunity
necessary	needed	important
help people get better job	excellent value	missing
It's	an unknown	entity to me
training	jobs	missing
local	appropriate	necessary
home	affordable	good instructors
affordable	accessible	responsive
caring	well-managed	hard-working

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   30

34

14A	14B	14C
proximity	open to most	variety of offerings
proximity	affordable	future
opportunity	needed	supportive
affordable	available	success-oriented
like a junior college	missing	missing
accessible	progressive	collaborative
growing	pr (strong)	committed faculty
affordable	convenient	missing
affordable	available	missing
great for area	missing	missing
successful	convenient	challenging
introduction	to	universities
affordable	visible	working
convenient	accessible	committed
convenient	affordable	resourceful
well run	meets needs	progressive
opportunity	accessibility	growing pains
training/education for improved lifestyle	missing	missing
local	affordable	alternative
convenient	progressive	visionary
accessible	affordable	caring
dedicating	motivating	inspirational
home	growth	opportunity

14A	14B	14C
affordable	educates	accessible
near	affordable	missing
opportunity	home-based	missing
opportunity	value	challenge
responsible	comitment	affordable
good	effective	better
alternative	missing	missing
local	progressive	higher learning
progressive	dedicated	pro-active
education	close to home	tries hard to improve students
affordable	prepare for the workforce Ind. in less time	missing
opens doors	motivates students	step ladder to higher learning
supportive	friendly environment	energetic to continue expanding program
convenient	affordable	service-oriented
convenient	encouraging	economic growth
fantastic	incredible	outstanding
?	missing	missing
entrepreneurial	busy	distracted
accessible	local	diversified
educational	opportunities	financially affordable
friendly	helpful	responsible
opportunity	convenience	access
the	Peoples	College

14A	14B	14C
accessible	training	jobs
unique	convenience	location
local	convenient	stepping stone
necessary	practical	important
location	new facility	missing
basic education	high need	growth
great opportunity	Starr Co. asset	beautiful institution
dynamic	committed	successful
convenient to home	missing	missing
great	needed	utilized
equal opportunity	future	missing
very good alternative	missing	missing
A real opportunity for those attending	missing	missing
promote	compassionate	caring
location	affordability	accommodating
industrious	missing	missing
accessible	expanding	opportunities
accessible	affordable	effective
student	centered	learning
affordable	effective	opportunity
convenient	opportunity	missing
great	reliable	missing
affordable	accessible	missing

37

14A	14B	14C
service	opportunity	commitment
location	stress pride	availability
high quality	affordable	close to home
close by	missing	missing
opportunity	accessibility	missing
affordable	minority participation of students	missing
convenient	affordable	missing
opportunity	convenient	training
convenient	missing	missing
It	is	OK
vocational	practical	missing
progressive	successful	quality
accessible	affordable	flexible
convenient	improving	inespensive
convenient	local	missing
needed	excellent acceptance	fills a big need
affordable	opportunity	training
opportunity for success	missing	missing
missing	missing	missing
quality	quantity	cost
disappointment	not-responsive	missing
opportunity	employment	pride
accessible	missing	missing
affordable	convenient	accessible

14A	14B	14C
missing	asset	missing
remedial	affordable	helping
growth	cooperation	missing
close by	easy access	missing
excellence	success	potential
availability	flexible	accommodating
affordable	accessible	work training
accessible	affordable	flexible
great	alternative	to PAU
home-like	usable	good atmosphere for local [illegible]s
opportunity	challenges	goals
caring	comprehensive	accessible
convenient	affordable	expanding
The best higher education facility in the RGV	missing	missing
student	community	involvement
local	education	support
an asset to our communities	missing	missing
progressive	lively	adaptable
resourceful	availability	expansion
vital	vibrant	valuable
local access	rude management	always problems with registration
community	people	supportive
commitment	partnership	impact

14A	14B	14C
new	local	helpful
outstanding	(life changed)	wonderful
accessible	growing	important
excellence	in affordable higher learning	missing
taxes	remedial	wasteland
committed to edu[cation?]	growing	partners in education
helps	some	students
really	really	trying!
affordable	location	missing
growing	vision	missing
local	community	higher education
great	friendly	missing
great	missing	missing
affordable	missing	committed
affordable	convenient	visionary
opportunity	privilege	missing
excellent	exciting	vital
good	good	good
convenient	affordable	missing
location	affordable	quality
local	available	accessible
greedy	chaotic	arrogant & misfocused

Appendix C:

Responses to Item 15

Responses to Item 15

Accessability and acceptability to a broad range of students
convenience
locations – Associates program in the RGV
It's considered an accredited college
the staff, professors and interaction with everyone
The institution is filling an educational resource that was not available to our children in the past
it is attempting to meet a recognized need
bridge between high school & higher ed
It demonstrates a great need for training our workforce.
multiple locations
move to provide more courses in the MidValley for students to attend college
bridge between high school & higher ed
the location & its ability to have several locations for everyone's convenience
close to home
teacher to student ration in which provides students w/ a more adequate learning experience & environment
Its future potential
nothing
attitude towards students – supportive env. [ironment?]
It's cheap & close to home.
provides affordable education to Valley people; students are well trained
job training for career enhancement
college courses for high school students
the expansion of campuses through Hidalgo Co.
close to home in RGC, Starr Co.
its convenient location
that it gives students a second chance to achieve
availability to all
it's close to home & affordable
opportunity for average or below average student to learn a trade
close to home for our kids in Roma, Texas
how close it is for students to attend STCC
that there are different locations through out the Valley
the professors we have had are good professors
accessibility
proximity to each individual community
availability to everyone
location
that it makes it accessible to our young people
available for everybody/affordable
education at an affordable price
that it exists for those who do not need a 4 year college
technical training
community involvement

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   38

Responses to Item 15, cont.
instructors, administration
the educ [ational?] opportunity it gives students who are unable to go away to a major university
provides education opportunities for people that otherwise could not qualified [sic] either because of money or education
an opportunity for students to see if college is for them
STCC provides an opportunity to youth & adults who would not have attended college because of low S.E.S.
it fills a need in the RGV communities for its students
the programs available for high school students to earn credit
close to home
meets the needs of industry and students
affordable tuition/ quality math dept.
different locations
quality education at a reasonable price
some of this courses can be transferred to U.T.P.A.
availability for our students in our community
it is available to our citizens
that it provides an outlet for that individual who wants to improve their quality of life
the excellent commitment to education in the community
concerned with quality education without internal politics
opportunity of an education, at a low cost
local education
stepping-stone for marginal students
gives local students an alternative to a 4 yr institution which they can not afford or are not prepared for.
the opportunity afforded to all
service for clients
its cooperative staff and hard working faculty
answering a need
ability to meet so many needs – The students' need for affordable education – employers' needs for well trained workforce – community needs for local higher education
the environment
its ability to educate its own citizens who might not otherwise have the ability to further their career
availability to all
everyone has equal opportunity to earn college hours while in HS
geographical locations
provides excellent alternative for persons not want/needing or being able to get a 4 yr degree
it's a local college
ability to expand programs and course offerings
offers a way to further education
same as above [affordable; prepare for the workforce Ind. in less time]
it's close to students' homes
gives students additional opportunities to continue their education
warm and positive college environment

43

Responses to Item 15, cont.
the affordability & opportunity
it caters to the people that don't know whether college (4 yr) is for them
how well its phenomenal growth has been handled
I have only worked w/ the Partnership and I am very satisfied w/ their services. Thanks to [name] & [name]
local education for local people
convenience
hands on education
gives our students an opportunity for quality education close to home
workforce training programs available for employers
it provides a great educational experience for the our [sic] community and its dedicated employees pull it all together
raising the level of education/training to meed demands for better skilled/trained workforce
proximity
[1] low cost [2] accessible to all or many
classes are provided at different hours of the day/evening
It provides education in a much needed void
Rio Grande City has one in Starr County
STCC fills an educational need.
STCC provides excellent services for students
It fills a need, it bridges the gap between high school and college
nearby
access locally
accessibility
available, economical and I feel good instruction
make effort to provide student's needs
that it can serve as an alternative for the non college bound student
commitment to student achievement
Commitment to providing quality learning opportunities for all students
accessible and accountable
the opportunity for students to receive individual attention due to size of classes
affordable college tuition – gives the youth in this area the opportunity to get an education
that it provides an opportunity for many students to attend college
close to home
provides an education to those that can't afford going out of the Valley
a caring administration that is committed to providing college opportunities to the students of our community
available in Mid Valley area
addressing the needs of students
access
technical careers that offer better opportunities for better paying jobs
Valley institution
close to home
it is meeting a need that was much needed for a long time
providing professors to teach at our local high schools

44

Responses to Item 15, cont.
affordable – multi-campuses
flexibility
providing higher education to growing numbers of students
Allows many local kids a chance to attend college that can't afford to go away to school.
raises the standard of living & opportunity for students
all of the above [affordable, opportunity, training]
It gives students an opportunity to attend college who might not have been able to.
that it provides our community with a post high school opportunity to an education
opportunity
It's here and eventually could become a Community college
#2 ["Increases opportunity to attend college close to home"]
provides another educational option to local students
its tremendous growth
convenient
that they are giving the people a chance before a 4 yr College and adults in the community
working to meet employers' needs
provides a bridge for underprivileged hispanics [sic] to enter prof[essional?] jobs
that it's close to home
Its effort to fulfill a need
Give the entire community access to learn a variety of careers.
that is responding to community need for an educated society
It is sensitive to students' needs
our own campus here in Starr County
Its wonderful staff!
will design a program to fit a business needs
a person can go to STCC instead of PAU (UTPA)
STCC tries to meet local needs of communities.
the willingness to grow!
It is helping local students become productive members of society
its quick response to meet community learning needs
campus location at different areas of the Valley
opportunity for those who couldn't get an education
local access
home grown and operated
Always looking to improve. Good job to All.
helps the local kids get started on a college education
Best decision McAllen ever made
provides an important educational/developmental opportunity for many students
increases educational opportunities in the area
public information
It keeps the self esteem of the student high!
affordability and the diversity of the curricula (Training as well as college courses)
takes them off the streets
access

Responses to Item 15, cont.
affordable
brings a college education to the students
helping to meet our severe educational needs
accessible to all students
everything
provides college education close to home
We have it here locally
quality education at affordable price
home
its willingness to work w/ high school students
see # 14 [location, affordable, quality]
It's possible to get a good education there
its future potential

46

Appendix D:

Responses to Item 16

47

Responses to Item 16

Eventually, have a central campus, when adequate funding is available
control growth better
Drill down on needed core subjects
students with high school diploma can choose to take basic courses (history, math, reading & writing)
Focus on improving from within and be less concerned with generating "numbers" to impress bureaucrats
quality of instructors
increased classroom capacity
improve the available space for classes and expansion
offer more college transfer courses
more sections of a course to allow more students to attend classes in the evening
increased classroom capacity
tighter security during school hours
allow students to take courses to advance even if the students have not passed the TASP. Students are passing the regular basic courses.
quarterly semesters give students the opportunity to finish programs rapidly
Real strategic & appropriate to region reality planning & accountable follow through
price & quality
to provide better facilities
Ask the President to quit being so condescending & overbearing.
I don't know that it needs to be changed, but make sure that good students committed to an education are the ones accepted. An open policy, where everyone is accepted, regardless of ability or commitment to finish the degree could backfire. In other words, growth for the sake of growth is no good.
less politics, more job training and skills development
more student counseling/ RN courses
none
make a big campus in RGC
offer more college transferable courses to Pan-Am
missing
the hiring of more proficient teachers in speaking the English language
the students, and the community, would expect the most rigorous of standards to be expected & met
--
improve the quality of courses, student accountability
provide more financial assistance for its expansion of services
Get more buildings – even if we have Tax increase
cost
understanding course descriptions
have the same type of buildings as UT at PAN AM
continue to upgrade staff
TASP on high school campus
to have more funding for land expansion
nothing, just continue improving to reach excellence!
NONE
Make it a 4 year school
Improve hiring of students – Improve placement

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   44

Responses to Item 16, cont.

increased parking
better training area at CATT [CAAT?]
to give it more funding
N/A
less fringe subjects – concentration on practical offerings
Include specialized courses/training leading to qualified electricians, plumbers, AC, welders, drafting, etc.
to actively seek more fundraising activities from other groups to assist students with financial needs. Also, to partner with local high schools early to inform students about STCC.
to continue to work on retaining qualified staff who are committed to the school's goal
have one big campus
Expand and improve concurrent and contract training opportunities for high school students
quality of administration in some areas/ no science labs!
focus on one or two priorities of mission
to explore the possibility of providing instruction in those areas that are in demand out in the workforce
more curriculum
N.A.
increase graduates' speaking & presentation skills
not try to be all things to all people – Focus on students
higher profile
strive to not duplicate efforts by UTPA
making course selection/teaching more applicable/suitable to a variety of time schedules
to provide more classes for students in the Mid-Valley area
N.A.
continue present direction – enlarging its offerings and increasing its availability
expansion on several campuses
to expand the competitive athletics programs
I am satisfied with the service. Excellent!
additional campuses
McAllen location, No expansion, Parking on North - unsafe
establish more employee/family benefits for personnel/staff
Negative publicity. Student radicals – not sure STCC can do much about this
bring in more programs, fields & provide more funding & grants for students to continue
to provide higher level courses
hire better quality instructors; better TASP preparation
organization within the Dept especially activities
higher standards in professionalism
give them more money to help our students
to become more knowledge[able?] of their services so that I can be able to participate in this survey
more/better organization administratively
consolidate campus
reroute traffic
Be more flexible w/ students taking remedial courses due to TASP
increase funding available for training
Admissions process is weak and needs to be improved
N/A

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   45

Responses to Item 16, cont.

assess chemical hazards, STCC on FM 3167 (Rio Grande City) is sitting on property that is saturated with agri-chemicals used on that land for nearly half a century
needs to provide more information on what is available from different agencies as to financial help - work training
–
to have more classes offered here in Starr County, than to have to travel to McAllen
I would like to see STCC raise its academic reputation.
To make this community college a four yr.
Increase funding
more academic
?
more input from community
I don't know
parking
N/A
Keep pace with rapid growth – present & future
none
Streamline the registration process – long lines
I think STCC has tried to grow too fast & has sacrificed quality for increased numbers.
be more efficient in sending transcripts & other information in time.
enhance its reputation
that more courses would be available for concurrent enrollment for high school students
Keep doing what you are doing.
Have Pan/American University allow more transfer courses
none
more rooms at the specific campuses and better quality professors
expand satellite campus courses
Financial Aid dept. needs to be more user friendly. UTPA does an excellent job!
more night tutors
inculcate higher education
more distance learning opportunities
to not "blame" the public schools for lack of basic skills
increase scholarships available
?
increase classrooms and classes being offered
increase its budget
replace the campus downtown with new facility
larger w/ more career choices
try to get a higher TASP passing percentage from the remedial classes
more parking
Present success stories in a capsule on TV so people could build Hope.
improving high tech training
more advanced courses

Responses to Item 16, cont.

To expand some of its courses to be more detailed. For example, have a complete MS certification for computer users, etc.
N/A
more of a presence in Mid Valley (Weslaco)
local [based, basal], user friendly for locals
I would expand campus so that students will not have to go take classes elsewhere.
make it a 4 yr university
more trade programs for Starr County
Grow at a faster pace
higher graduate percentage
Nothing comes to my attention. . .keep up the good work!
To have a community-involvement big landscaping project for beautiful campus grounds & public art
grow it faster
some management employees & registration technique
reach out to Mexican market with strong ESL & bilingual programs
evening hours for current employed
Get the Legislature to send more funds to support the school!
make it bigger and better
better promotion of its programs
make it larger
improve quality of instructors
keep them in high school for all the remedial courses.
Increase the extracurricular program (band, Choir, basketball, soccer, track)
Raise grades teach or drop them out [sic]
more satellite campus locations
If possible remove some of the charges ie parking, insurance etc. that I feel isn't necessary
ability to contact officials when needed – have tried before and found it very difficult – did not return calls or acknowledge visits
provide opportunities for scholarship intercollegiate athletics
improve quality and preparedness of instructors (faculty)
add more classrooms & bring more needed subjects to be taught
that it grow faster
N/A
greater diffusion of info about the business of the running of STCC
Real strategic & appropriate to region training & accountable follow through

Appendix E:

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument

STCC is probably the best administered educational institution in Texas.

As a taxpayer uncontrolled growth is scary as indicates a lack of fiscal discipline, though it also demonstrates a substantial need..
I am concerned about the growing dependence upon the City of McAllen funds – you might offset this concern with more P.R. as to what STCC does for McAllen.
I would LOVE to see a "new" program that would link up underachieving students in middle schools and high schools and prepare them better. I.e. less remedial needs.

Great job so far – focus on core programs and those that will feed the market place with qualified job candidates-
be realistic about composites of majority population – however to mid income Hispanic families [sic]. Students from South Texas typically will not venture into corporate America, due to strong social ties with family and environment. There are exceptions, but better to provide an associates degree and go to work than fill this generation of students with the ideas they can compete on a national scale.
Nothing wrong with the fact that a variety of "groups" took several generations to achieve the perceived "top". It took mine (Irish) about 4 that I know of.
Not prejudiced -- simply realistic

Students should be able to choose whether they need or do not need basic courses (such as history, basic math, reading, or writing) and concentrate on the courses they are actually going to college for. Whether students pass the TASP tests with flying colors or not says nothing about how they will perform in the courses of major interest. Students still have to pay for their courses.

STCC is a great institution! I should have enrolled sooner than I did. [Name] has been very instrumental every time I have needed staff assistance. You are doing a wonderful job.

College Course preparation should be the responsibility of high schools. No need to be sure that instructors teaching college level courses to high school students are qualified. Also, this is the best way to hold High School principles and superintendents accountable for the quality of their students!

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument, cont.

There are a number of positive changes that have been made to improve accessibility for students to attend STCC. Continue making improvements that will increase enrollment and get more students started on the path to higher learning. To do this, some basic courses that develop students' skills and learning will be required. STCC is raising the level of cognitivity [sic] of students and the population in the valley. Continue strong recruitment on school campuses of students who would otherwise not enroll in college. In the end, strong skills in math, writing and reading will provide a solid base for students to be successful, and upon completing courses at STCC, the student should have competitive skills to go and be successful at any major university. Continue improving education for students and preparing our Valley residents for the future.

Because of the percent of economically disadvantaged students in this area, making the college tuition affordable is a priority. STCC has done a great job!
Because of the Hispanic culture and values toward family, having the college "accessible" to the "home" makes students take advantage of higher education opportunities.
I believe that STCC is one of the best investments this community has made. Any institution with the dynamic growth we have had will have some problems. The point is, however, that there is a common purpose over there of "service to those less fortunate." Great Leadership!

I may be missing the information, but I am not aware of the successes of STCC. I know it is growing, but I don't know about cost of tuition, percent of entering students that complete degree; partnering with other agencies, institutions, etc.. Maybe a little more media effort is needed to inform the rank and file citizenship of the Valley. I know it is growing (many campuses) but how well is STCC doing, other than large numbers of students. I think it will be useful to publish such information so people know not only the quantity of students attending STCC, but also the quality of the graduates.

Please worry less about college courses for high school students.

More representation of the Mid-Valley on the Board of Regents and Student Council.

The business of selling textbooks creates a lot of disillusion [sic] among the student body. The cost to purchase is high and the trade-in value is low. A lot of students feel ripped off.

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument, cont.

Personally, I sometimes despair that things will never change because the undergraduate system continues to turn out students that need further development of fundamental skills. When I interview 40 people for a receptionist job and they are nice and want to work -- but can't spell or type a letter, I get very discouraged. In my opinion, one of the best things STCC could do would be to identify the school districts that do the poorest to the best job of preparing their students. Use a rating system, publicize it, and shame the school districts and families in those districts -- into doing a better job of educating their students and preparing them for life -- and giving them opportunities beyond STCC. If we don't improve the system, STCC will be overwhelmed and taxpayers will begin to resent the resulting tax burden. (More than you probably wanted to hear -- but it's off my chest now!)

Make available equipment (classroom) to the local schools.

Dr. Reed has been doing a great job! Thanks!

Need better personnel to run your IT Department.

Dr. Reed,
You have done an excellent job on expanding STCC to many locations. People appreciate that.

STCC is a great asset to our Community and for Starr County. Many of our high schools' graduates cannot afford to attend colleges outside of the county. STCC is filling in and ironing out that void.
Starr County has a rich history and cultural heritage. As the college continues to grow, it is important to nurture that heritage not just through mariachi groups and folk culture festivals, but through guest lectures of Mexican/Hispanic descent, a course in Mex/Am studies, cultural art and theatre.
Because of the implications of NAFTA, STCC is in a position to develop students who through specialized courses in business, health occupations, environmental studies, etc., will be able to work on either side of the border or South America. That's the future, and I wish all the luck to you in this endeavor.

STCC provides excellent educational opportunities for the students and taxpayers of the Rio Grande Valley.

Stronger writing skills needed.
Quality control is lacking; sometimes students never get a syllabus or book; instructor "no shows" to class. Students are not always given all the preparation needed to transfer to 4-year institution.

I would like to see STCC establish themselves here in our La Joya area. It truly would be an ideal location. We have so many people from our inner communities as well as nearby cities that would take advantage of your school.

Keep up the good work!

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument, cont.

I believe that you take care of students and student needs. Your staff is caring and works to accommodate the students. This is important for high school kids because this is their first introduction to higher education and your staff makes it a positive one.

Thank you so much for all the hard work you have done to provide students a means at improving their way of live. Stay the course!

STCC has been a blessing for many of our students – they have an opportunity to get an education close to home and many of them find out they can do it and stay the course-because STCC is there for them.

GOOD JOB!!

I wish I could help you, but I have never visited your campus and/or your programs. I have heard positive comments (few) and I'm sure you are a lot of help to many people.

I wish you luck.;

I feel that STCC has been the major influence in my daughters graduating from the university. I feel the support given to them by your staff, especially teachers like [name] and [name] in the math department. I just want to say that continue doing your best in educations, providing opportunities for our children and students. God bless you and keep up the good work. Thanks, (Name)

STCC has provided the opportunity for students to get an education close to home. Many of the college students at the Starr and Mid-valley campuses would have never had the opportunity for lack of transportation. They are not able to drive out of their hometowns, because they usually share one vehicle among several family members. Additionally, the college environment is not as intimidating as a big university is for many first generation college students and for the non-traditional student. The faculty and staff at the college have done a tremendous job in helping this special group of our society feel comfortable and they have also helped these students deal with many insecurities about their abilities to perform at college level. You have all done a super job. The results are evident.

Students should be taught, instructed how to look for a job – how to look, how to dress, how to talk. Go alone, don't take friends or children when you go for an interview. Look and act like you want a job. I wish that I knew first hand about STCC – I feel it is excellent. I wish I knew that it was. I have high regards for STCC.
Thanks

I respect the leadership at STCC and I believe they have done a lot in a short period of time. Keep up the good work.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   52

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument, cont.

Since the knowledge base of our community is very low in this county, STCC will play a big part in raising it in the near future. With more education, this community will be able to grow without the fear of keeping the economic level of this county at the stage that it has been for the last fifty years.

STCC is working well to meet the needs of students for the 21st century. There is obviously commitment and focus. The mission of the college is on the right track.

I don't have sufficient information about STCC to properly evaluate the list of functions. However, the things I do know about the school are all positive. Keep striving for success. Best of luck in the future.

Provide seminars to companies to recruit new students to return to the classroom and obtain a degree or obtain a higher degree. Our company took a class 2 years ago, where more than half of the employees attended the class. From that class a few enrolled full time.

STCC is helping my employees become better educated, self confident and happy. Thank you for all you do.

Now that you have another tax entity and 80% of your students are in remedial classes when is the great experiment going to end? Keep the kids in elementary school until they "master" something called skills like reading, writing and arithmetic.

I have no knowledge of the level of fiscal responsibilities.
As you can see from my rating, I think STCC is providing an excellent service to Valley students. The college continues to grow. This shows it has been accepted and has credibility.

Allows student into system who are not qualified. Enter without knowing what it's all about just to show high enrollment. Waste of time and money.

I heard a news report this morning that Dr. Reed and Dr. Mike Navarez wrote letters to Congress complaining about some reaction they had to a recent change or proposed change being considered. The news report said they thought it was "unfair" to do what was being discussed and was not treating the "majority" and the "minority" equally. I would really like the United States and all publicly financial [sic] institutions like "you" to quit promoting race-color-sex and education and treat all Americans the same without labeling everyone.

STCC should publish a "Hall of Shame" of Top Ten Valley school districts which send the MOST unprepared students on to college. You need to show people the emperor has no clothes.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services   53

Open-Ended Comments from Back of Instrument, cont.
You are TOO much "in bed" w/ VIDA and MEDC -- STCC has lost its original focus and its rapid and unplanned growth is costly to tax payers, as well as being very counter-productive and unprofessional. The total educational "system" needs to function as a real system. We are paying increasing amounts of money to support a mess -- Do not expect to keep robbing us and producing a mess you want us to keep rescuing. Get real -- pay your people well, they're good people. No matter how much you want to be --you are not a university.
Employees need to be efficient, friendly and ready to help each individual.. Some employees need to understand it is more than JUST a job. My philosophy: If you don't like your job, you need to get out, because it makes the whole company or organization look bad with sour attitudes. I have worked in the public for 25 years and know that this is important. Registration has always been a problem there. I have graduated from UTPA already so I haven't been back to STCC in a couple of years, maybe it has been corrected. I REALLY HOPE SO! On a positive side: tuition is affordable for now. With the economy changing so much hopefully this will continue in the years to come. The downtown center is a dump! The building needs to be condemned. Which I understand when STCC took it over, it was condemned. Location is good, use all that money to tear it down and build a nice environment. I do that that this survey is passed on to the President Shirley A, Reed, MBA, Ed.D. Since she signed the letter that accompanied this survey. Thanks   Concerned Citizen

Statement of Equal Opportunity

No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored or conducted by South Texas Community College on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

Alternative Format

This document is available in an alternative format upon request. Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at (956) 688-2327.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, a Division of Information and Technology Services

ERIC

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce. or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

EFF-089 (3/2000)

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC