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2.9

THEMES EMERGING FROM APPRAISAL HIGHLIGHTS
SELF-STUDY, NOVEMBER 2005

Strengths

- Staff pride in College mission, perceived as offering access to education and changing lives for students who have not been well served by other institutions. Idealism, dedication to non-traditional students and a diverse community. 1, 4, 11, *
- Highly diverse and growing student body, stimulating innovation and curricular adjustments to student needs. 1, 4, 6, *
- Well-developed General Education assessment system, national recognition. 4, *
- New strategic planning cycle coinciding with Achieving the Dream application, generating mutually supportive data collection. 2, *
- Continuous planning process that responds flexibly to grant and other opportunities, recently leading to establishment of Capital Prep magnet school & several new academic programs. 2, 4, 6
- Well-established governance system, statewide model for other colleges. 3, 11
- Up-to-date technology in library, classrooms, labs, and for online teaching. 4, 5, 7, 8, *
- Downtown location consolidating two campuses in beautiful building. 8, *
- Budget management moving toward participatory and flexible model, with Banner providing effective data management. 9.
- Strong revenues from enrollment, grants, bonds, and Continuing Ed. 9
- Multiple forms of written and posted communication; new webmaster updating site. 10

Weaknesses

- Instability of mission statements, scattered perception that the College is not providing a sufficiently academic environment. 1, 4, 11,*
- Multiplicity of challenges faced by students; deepening lack of readiness for college work. Large percentage of students entering at developmental level; resource allocations not matching their needs. Students not reaching desired proficiencies. 4, 6, *
- No structure for continuation of General Education assessment, unclear accountability for other student learning assessment. 4, *
- Perception of haphazardness in planning & evaluation, responsiveness to demands of grant applications and other initiatives rather than central mission. 2, 11, *
- Lack of general understanding of how magnet school fits with College mission and space/resource priorities. 2, 6, 8, 11, *
- Union contract differences and communications issues limiting participation in governance and policy making; some non-functioning committees. 3,11
- Excessive reliance on adjuncts; inadequate full-time staff to support programs and academic advisement. 4, 5, *
- Persistent lack of funds for programs, full-time staff, release time for leadership of initiatives, academic & student support services. Lowest percentage allocation among all CT Community Colleges for instructional and academic support. 4, 5, 6, 9, *
- Uneven IT support for educational technology. 4, 5, 7, 8 *
- Condominium-style building ownership leading to high fixed plant costs, high passage and maintenance fees, space limitations. 8, 9
- Vertical campus causing long waits at elevators, overcrowding, atrium noise, community fragmentation. Inadequate bookstore space in place of planned fitness center. 8,*
- Persistent divisions within the College community along multiple lines (race, ethnicity, job status, union) leading to acceptance of dysfunctions, uneasy collegial environment. *