Economic and Workforce Challenges

Three major economic and workforce concerns in the community were identified:
- Increasing need for skilled, qualified and prepared workers that meet the needs of today’s industry.
- Keeping salaries competitive, contending with the high cost of healthcare and keeping property taxes affordable.
- Offering accessible and affordable programs for students of all ages, needs and backgrounds.

Economic Opportunities

Study participants also identified economic opportunities for Hastings, with the following three items emerging as most important:
- Enhanced opportunities in manufacturing, retail, entertainment recreation, industrial development and healthcare.
- Upturn in agriculture, value-added agriculture, technological agricultural advances and smart farming.
- Enhanced educational opportunities, distance learning and online learning.
### Findings of the Feasibility Study

The study found that a significant majority of participants believe Central Community College is worthy of support:

- 96% of respondents are favorable toward CCC-Hastings.
- 92% of respondents are favorable toward the Hastings Campus Cabinet.
- 83% of respondents are favorable toward the faculty at CCC-Hastings.
- 79% of respondents are favorable toward the proposed major gifts campaign.
- Nearly three-fourths place the needs of CCC-Hastings as a high or medium priority compared to their other philanthropic priorities.
- 84% believe the proposed goal of raising $5 million through a major gifts campaign is attainable.
- More than three-fourths believe the proposed campaign schedule is well-advised.

### Strengths

Community members participating in the study identified these strengths for the Hastings Campus:

- Enjoys a solid reputation for being the “shining star” of the community due to its effective community relationship-building efforts and attractive facilities.
- Offers a wide array of quality programs that meet the needs of area industry and prepare students to enter the workforce or pursue further educational opportunities.
- Employs visionary and approachable leadership, faculty and staff.
- Offers students affordable and geographically accessible opportunities to improve their lives.

### Challenges

The study identified the following challenges for the college in Hastings:

- Locating additional sources of funding and contending with economic challenges.
- Remaining responsive to the program needs of business and industry.
- Increasing student enrollment and addressing the competition with other educational institutions.
- Enhancing awareness of the campus’ contributions to the region’s educational, economic and cultural development.
- Increasing collaboration across the region and between all Central Community College campuses.

### Summary

Central Community College’s long-time presence in Hastings has contributed to the growth and development of the community. Respondents in this study appear to strongly agree with the college administration and Board of Governors that the current Advanced Manufacturing and Welding facility on the Hastings Campus is no longer adequate to meet technical, workforce and other educational needs of the region’s industry.

While this study identifies challenges for CCC-Hastings, it indicates extremely strong support in the community through a major gifts campaign for an expansion of the Advanced Manufacturing and Welding facilities, as well as a scholarship funding initiative.
Participants are very positive toward the two initiatives proposed by the college for a major gifts campaign.

- 89% of respondents are favorable toward the Advanced Manufacturing and Welding Expansion initiative. Respondents indicated that the expansion is necessary if the campus is to answer the training needs of the region.
- 94% are overwhelmingly favorable toward the scholarship initiative, believing that scholarship assistance is critical for many students and that donors will support direct assistance.

To further enhance CCC’s ability to achieve goals of a major gifts campaign, Rich Gross Solutions recommends that CCC address the following common interviewee concerns during the planning, awareness and solicitation phases of the campaign.

- Increase marketing efforts and broaden outreach to enhance awareness of the opportunities CCC offers the region and its students.
- Develop a strong case for private-sector support that demonstrates a solid return on donor investment.
- Contend with issues surrounding property tax increases, anti-tax sentiments and the perceptions of high government spending.
- Cultivate strong campaign leadership and volunteers representing a broad range of community and industry interests.
- Enhance business and industry partnerships.
- Prepare a detailed campaign plan.
- Conduct data-driven prospect research.

As a result of the overwhelmingly positive answers in the study, Rich Gross Solutions recommends that Central Community College initiate a three-phased, 18-month major gifts campaign with an option to extend to 24-months depending on the early success of securing lead gifts. Other recommendations are:

- Set a working goal of $5 million in cash and three-to five-year pledges, grants, contracts and planned gifts for the construction and equipment and $500,000 toward scholarships.
- Appoint Dean Moors as campaign manager.

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