

Columbus State University Strategic Planning

SWOT Analysis

Draft Version

(Updated 2012)

Opportunities and Threats:

- (1) What are the general or broad environmental forces that are currently affecting the industry (as a whole) in which the organization competes?

Economic Trends:

- Down economy has caused economic hardships on undergraduate students and/or their families
- Unemployment rate and the economy are expected to improve in the next five years
- Percentage of U.S. GDP dependent upon international trade has increased steadily each year from 11.6% in 1995 to 15.2% in 2008 (2010 OECD Factbook, p. 65)
- U.S. exports have increased 15.6% each year between 2009 and 2011 according to the U.S. Dept. of Commerce (2012). Our trade surplus in services is very large, and continued success depends upon a highly educated and globally adept workforce (from Neal McCrillis).
- In the next 10 years the fastest growing jobs requiring bachelor's or master's degrees are projected to be related to healthcare, education (elementary and secondary), technology, and business
- Nationally, the healthcare and social assistance industry is expected to create about 28% of all new jobs in the U.S. economy and add about 57 million new jobs in the next 10 years
- BLS data suggest robust growth in employment in the next 10 years for individuals with graduate degrees (about 2.6 million new and replacement jobs over the next 10 years)
- Data on number of jobs requiring professional certificates (from Sri)

Technological Trends:

- Increasing need and dependence on technology in the classroom
- Increasing demand for online and hybrid course technology
- Fast-paced nature of technological changes that require constant upgrades and resources
- Increasing usage of “virtual” machines (e.g., Chromebooks)
- Wireless communications, iCloud technology, and BYOD (“Bring Your Own Device”) learning environments
- Opportunities for open software (freeware)

Political-Legal Trends:

- Declining appropriations to higher education by the federal and state governments (e.g., summer Pell grants, HOPE scholarships)
- Budget reduction due to political influences
- Reductions in HOPE scholarship program (how much?)

Sociocultural Trends:

- NACE 2012 survey indicates employers need graduates who have the ability to work in a team structure, good verbal communication skills, the ability to make decisions and solve problems, and time management skills
- Growth in international student applications: The Council of Graduate Schools reports that the number of applications from prospective international students to U.S. graduate schools increased 9% in 2012, 11% in 2010, and 9% in 2010. Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2011, International Student Enrollment at Columbus State University increased by 8.5%.
- The 10 most popular majors (nationally) are shown below with corresponding 2010 median salaries and unemployment rates for graduates (according to 2010 Census Data -- in descending order):
 - (1) Business Management: \$56,000, 6%
 - (2) General Business: \$59,000, 5.3%
 - (3) Accounting: \$61,000, 5.4%
 - (4) Nursing: \$60,000, 2.2%
 - (5) Psychology: \$43,000, 6.1%
 - (6) Marketing: \$59,000, 5.9%
 - (7) Communications: \$50,000, 6.3%
 - (8) Education (Elementary and Secondary): \$41,000, 3.8%
 - (9) Computer Science: \$77,000, 5.6%
 - (10) English: \$48,000, 6.7%
- From Marc Olivie: What are the majors with the worst outlook? Do we know how many graduates end up having to work in a different (or lower level) field? Look at expenditures by major **on the student level here**
- According to the U.S. Dept. of Education (NCES), national college enrollment is increasing, but at a slower rate than in the past (for 2010 the increase for undergraduate students was 2% nationally). Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2011, Columbus State University's total enrollment increased by 9.4%.
- According to U.S. Dept. of Education (NCES), the national public college graduation rates appeared to have increased slightly in the last 10 years
- According to the U.S. Dept. of Education (NCES), although for-profit colleges represented only 6% of all bachelor's degrees conferred in 2010, they are growing at a significant rate (387% increase in the number of degrees conferred in the last 10 years compared to a 29% increase for non-profit institutions)
- From Neal McCrillis: Between 2000 and 2007, higher education enrollment worldwide increased 53% with most of the increase coming from developing countries such as China and India (NAFSA, 2011).
- From Neal McCrillis: Internationally, there is a movement of students going abroad to study -- there was an increase of 11% in just one year (from 2009

to 2010). Simply put, countries with excess capacity have an opportunity to recruit those students as a vital piece of campus internationalization.

- From Neal McCrillis: Student surveys show that 85% of students believe “it is important to know about international issues and events to compete successfully in the job market,” and nearly 90% believe it is important to know and understand other cultures and customs to compete successfully in the job market. Additionally, over 70% say that all undergraduates should be required to study abroad (NAFSA, 2011).
- Generation Y cultural and learning differences (less “linear” and more multi-tasking, shorter attention spans, more project-based than time-based, more use of multimedia and technology)
- National shortage of doctorally-qualified faculty in some programs (especially Math, Science, Nursing, and Business) has made it more difficult and expensive to recruit faculty in these areas (data?)

- (2) What are the key factors in the immediate or specific environment (students, competitors, human resources, government, special interest groups, local community, etc.) that currently affect the organization's success (achievement of objectives)? Which are current or future opportunities or threats?

Local Employer/Community:

- Strong local community interest and support
- Growth in Ft. Benning population (statistics?)
- Local economic statistics and projections (get from Ben Blair)
- Close proximity to Fortune 500 companies and large employers:
 - Synovus (1,000 employees in Columbus)
 - TSYS (4,300 employees in Columbus)
 - AFLAC (4,000 employees in Columbus)
 - Muscogee County School District (6,000 employees)
 - Columbus Regional Healthcare (3,400 employees)
 - St. Francis Hospital (2,000 employees)
 - Kia Motors (3,000 employees in West Point)
- From Neal McCrillis: Employers regularly state that they want employees who can work with diverse teams, including those from different cultures. Both AFLAC and TSYS are major international companies with strong global ties.

Students:

- According to Census data, the growth in the college-age population for the state of Georgia is expected to remain steady through _____ then increase slightly through 2020 to ____ (Sri's data).
- The average age of Columbus State University's undergraduate population is 25. Between 2007 and 2011, the three largest increases in enrollment by age range were 51-60 (37.5%), Over 60 (31.6%) and 26-30 (22.3%).
- Look at RPG per major/program
- Rate of losing the HOPE scholarship after 1st year is very high for CSU (43% of 2011-12 students lost HOPE after Spring semester)

- Local high school test scores and graduation rates? Is it trending up or down? (need comparative data – peer and aspirational groups) Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2011, ACT scores for new Columbus State University Undergraduate Students remained relatively stable. However, during that same time frame, average SAT scores declined from 992 in 2007 to 973 in 2011. SAT scores should go up in 2012 based on the drop in basic studies.
- Low success/retention rates in the local service area, especially in Math and Science (statistics? -- look at it by major -- also look at cost/student for each major)

Government:

- Relationship with local and state political leaders (data?)
- Future funding models will include student performance data (e.g., RPG)

Competition:

- Increasing saturation in the post-secondary education in the local service area has made it more difficult to grow undergraduate student enrollment
- More competition from online and for-profit colleges (University of Phoenix, Strayer University, Virginia College, Miller-Motte Technical College)
- Columbus Technical College now offers two-year degrees
- Troy University-Phoenix City building downtown campus for programs in Nursing and International Business
- Restructuring/mergers of USG institutions may have an impact on CSU enrollment

(3) Specifically define the primary target market and how they choose colleges. Based on the target market definition, who are the college's main competitors? What are the primary factors that influence students' college choice? What are the primary factors that determine whether a student successfully completes his/her education at a particular institution (i.e., retention factors)? These are our "Key Success Factors."

Target Market Description:

- High School GPA:
- Test Scores:
- Geographic Location:

Factors Influencing Student Choice:

Factors Influencing Student Retention:

Are there differences by college/major?

(4) Which of these forces and factors are the most important to the organization and the environment in which it competes at the present time? Which will be important in the future?

Strengths and Weaknesses:

Identify the internal strengths and weaknesses related to:

Organizational Structure: Centralized or decentralized structure? Is the present structure consistent with objectives, strategies, policies, and programs? How does the structure compare with our peers?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

- Declining cohesiveness due to geographic expansion of campuses (main campus, downtown location, Ft. Benning location)
- Organizational Structure Disconnects (more info. here)

Institutional Culture: Shared beliefs, expectations and values -- Is the culture consistent with the current objectives, strategies, policies and programs? What is the culture's position on important issues facing the organization, such as productivity, quality of performance, adaptability to changes, etc.

Strengths:

- Faculty dedicated to quality teaching (data by department/major?)

Weaknesses:

- Culture of bureaucracy (more info. here)
- Resistance to change

Marketing: How does the marketing objectives, strategies, and programs compare with our peers? Are they effective? Are they consistent with the mission, objectives, strategies, and policies? How well is the organization performing in terms of its marketing position and marketing mix (product, price, location, and promotion)? What are we doing now to bring in the kind of students that we want, and how are we retaining them? Are these strategies successful? What are the trends? What works and what doesn't work?

Strengths (product, price, location, and promotion):

- Nationally accredited programs in business, education, music, theatre, art, and nursing (Chemistry and MPA programs are in the accreditation process)
- Competitive pricing (statistics and trends?)
- Reputation as an innovative, progressive institution (data?)
- Opportunities for Faculty/Student interaction (statistics?)
- Supportive environment for teaching and learning (data?)
- Positive reputation in the local service area (data?)
- Honors program opportunities for students
- Servant leadership program opportunities for students
- International education program opportunities for students

- Quality of teaching (statistics?)
- Location and size of Columbus (not too big, and not too small -- and 90 miles from an international airport)
- Appeal of dorms/loft apartments
- Downtown cultural and entertainment options for students
- Visibility and success of graduates (statistics?)
- Growing population of traditional students (statistics?)
- Diversity of student body (statistics as of Fall, 2011):
 - White (54.6%)
 - Black or African-American (35.1%)
 - Hispanic or Latino (4.3%)
 - Two or More Races (2.1%)
 - Asian (1.8%)
 - International (1.2%)
 - American Indian or Alaska Native (0.5%)
 - All Others (0.4%)
- Collaboration opportunities with local industry (good "town-gown" relations)

Weaknesses (product, price, location, and promotion):

- Lack of brand name recognition outside of the Columbus area (data?)
- Increased fees may have led to a decrease in student enrollment
- Lack of international students: Of the total Fall 2011 enrollment of 8,307 students, only 102 (or 1.2%) were International students. Our international student body is unusually diverse, but relatively small compared to other colleges (Neal McCrillis)
- Heavy reliance on adjuncts in core courses (data/statistics?)
- Low student retention rates (statistics by program?)
- Possible perception of community college by some (data?)
- Disparity in the quality of programs (data?)
- Admissions policies and services to students (data?)
- Large population of non-traditional students poses challenges to meet their demands while servicing the traditional students
- Inadequate retail activity catering to students
- Lack of Graduate programs
- Lack of student involvement in on-campus extracurricular activities (in part due to the number of nontraditional students)
- Library resources
- Ineffective communication systems (to students)
- Relationships with Ft. Benning personnel (more info. here)
- Weak articulation with Alabama institutions (more info. here)
- Limited recruitment in Alabama (data?)
- Inadequate campus safety resources (more info. here)

Finance: What are the current financial objectives, strategies, policies, and programs? Are they consistent with the organization's mission, objectives,

strategies, and policies? How well is the organization performing in terms of financial analysis compared to competition?

Strengths:

- Foundation Assets and strong support from the local community
- Grant money available for International Education opportunities for students
- Move to doctoral-granting institution has allowed for higher tuition and fees
- Entrepreneurial model has generated more revenues and flexibility for most colleges for planning and staffing purposes

Weaknesses:

- Financial strain of supporting three campuses (main campus, downtown campus, and Ft. Benning) and several other outreach operations (Coca Cola Space Science, Cunningham Center, Oxbow Meadows, etc.)
- State funds have declined 35% since 2009 (from Tom Hackett)
- Total state funding per student FTE is at the same level as 1994 (adjusted for inflation)
- Large percentage of students depending on declining federal/state financial aid (what percentage is it?)
- Entrepreneurial model requires enrollment maintenance to prevent future layoffs, and enrollment growth for additional personnel and equipment/upgrades
- From Marc Olivie: Does the availability of grant money vary by college/major? For example, does Schwob get more grant money than the History department?

Technology and Research: Are they consistent with the organization's current mission, objectives, strategies, and policies? What is the role of technology in organizational performance? What is the role of research in organizational performance? Does it provide a competitive advantage (compared to our peers)?

Strengths:

- Availability of computer labs for students
- Student research grants and programs
- Faculty development funds for research and travel to conferences

Weaknesses:

- Lack of administrative support for faculty research

Operations and Logistics: Are the organization's service objectives, strategies, policies, and programs consistent with the mission, objectives, strategies, and policies? How do they compare to peer institutions? Consider service facilities

(buildings, equipment, etc.), course scheduling, communications with customers, facility capacities and utilization rates, faculty-to-student ratios, availability and types of student services provided, ratings of professional and service personnel, retention rates by program/category (compared to our peers), etc. Is there an appropriate mix of support staff to professionals? Is there an appropriate mix of support staff to students? How well does the organization perform relative to competition? (Consider per unit cost of labor, overhead, scheduling of services/service staff, number of customers successfully served by category, etc.). What trends emerge from this analysis? What impact have these trends had on past performance and how might these trends affect future performance? Does this provide the firm with a competitive advantage relative to competition? Which are strengths and which are weaknesses?

Strengths:

- Aggressive land acquisitions by the University Foundation (more info.?)
- Quality of many of the physical facilities and infrastructure (more info.?)

Weaknesses:

- Quality of some of the physical facilities
- Lack of “21st century” classrooms in some buildings (e.g., Howard Bldg.)
- Quality of Science labs (in need of updating)
- Lack of coherence in the schedule of course offerings (more info. here)
- Shortage of student housing to meet demand (data?)
- Lack of reliable and safe transportation for students
- Bureaucratic systems frustrate students (data?)
- Parking shortages (data?)
- Ineffective assessment system of campus programs and services (more info. here)

Human Resource Management: Are the firm's current HRM objectives, strategies, policies, and programs consistent with the mission and the internal/external environments? How well is the organization's HRM performing in terms of the fit between individual employees and jobs? Consider turnover, layoffs, employee training, and quality of work life compared to competition. Consider faculty and staff qualifications, performance appraisal systems, training and development programs, and attitude surveys. What trends emerge from this analysis? Does HRM provide the organization with a competitive advantage?

Strengths:

- Qualified and committed faculty and staff (surveys and/or statistics?)
- No faculty layoffs despite significant budget cuts over the last 20 years
- Foundation leadership (data?)

Weaknesses:

- Declining cohesiveness due to strain of three campuses
- Heavy reliance on adjuncts in core courses (data/statistics?)

- Lack of qualified Ph.D's in the local employment pool (a national search is required for many fields)
- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified faculty to the local area
- Communication to faculty

Competencies: Which of the above internal factors are "core competencies" (those things the organization does well)? Which, if any, are "distinctive competencies" (those things the organization does better than competition)? Which of these factors are related to industry key success factors? Which might be important in the future?

Next Steps:

(1) Review the current mission and objectives to make sure they are appropriate given the current internal and external environment.

(2) Identify strategic alternatives. First priority strategies are those that shore up any internal weaknesses that are related to industry key success factors. We have to correct important weaknesses before we can move forward. Then investigate ways to match the organization's distinctive competencies to environmental trends/opportunities.

References for SWOT Data:

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