



Strategic Planning Community Outreach – Rotary Club of the Mainland

As part of the process of creating College of the Mainland's Strategic Plan for 2018-2023, Dr. Nichols will be meeting with various community constituencies. In these meetings Dr. Nichols will gather their input and feedback regarding six questions:

1. What are your perceptions of College of the Mainland today?
2. What are College of the Mainland's strengths?
3. Where do we meet your expectations?
4. What areas do we need to improve?
5. How can we partner with you?
6. Thinking of the future, what would a shared vision for College of the Mainland and the community look like?

On August 10 at 12:00 p.m., the Rotary Club of the Mainland were invited to speak with Dr. Nichols at their regularly scheduled meeting at Kelley's Country Cookin' restaurant in La Marque. In attendance were seventeen Rotarians. Also attending were several COM Cabinet members, Dr. Walker to facilitate the discussion, and supporting staff to document the meeting. Overall, the Rotarians were positive about College of the Mainland and related positive experiences they and their associates have had. Throughout the discussion and answering the above questions, some potential points of action became apparent. Three main themes emerged from the discussion: **Career Preparation and Placement, Student Services, Communication, and Facilities.**

Career Preparation and Placement

Many of the comments made during this session revolved around preparation and placement for specific careers. Those in attendance were very positive about the Police Academy and PTECH programs.

Some of those in attendance had personal experience with the Police Academy – going through it as a student, in-service programs, and as an adjunct professor. Those in attendance referred to the Police Academy as an ethical and well run organization and were impressed with the staff and faculty involved with the program; one Rotarian referred to it as “the best in the area”. Some suggestions for the program were also made. Law enforcement in the area is pushing to increase the diversity of the force and it was suggested that increasing the diversity of the applicant pool through the Police Academy would help. It was also suggested that towards the end of the Police Academy program there be steps in place to encourage students to continue their education for later opportunities at advancement.

Positive comments were also made about the PTECH program. One Rotarian who works at a local plant expressed that COM students are generally higher quality than those from other programs in the area and that they know that students from COM will be properly trained to do the job. One suggestion was to have a course improving work ethic.

One Rotarian in attendance brought up a program formerly available in League City that supported those in the community looking for a job. It assisted people by setting up a mock interview process and



providing video recordings to review and improve interview skills. It was suggested that a program like that to help those in the community develop job and interview skills would be beneficial

Another person attending brought up creating an initiative to get students interested in municipal work as a career and marketing the types of jobs attainable with an Associate's degree. She expressed the potential for partnering with local municipalities to that purpose.

Other potential new programs that those in attendance expressed interest in seeing were a Dental Hygienist program and a 4-year Nursing program. There was also some discussion about the potential for accelerated technical programs that would get workforce certificates or credentials faster than normal programs.

Student Services

Several of those in attendance shared positive feelings about the Collegiate High School and Dual Credit programs and believe both are extremely beneficial to the community.

There were some comments made regarding the possibility of athletics programs at COM to draw potential students and engage with the community. Baseball in particular was recommended as a potential athletic program and it was noted that Galveston College, Alvin Community College, and San Jacinto College have baseball programs. A Rotarian noted that Texas City has a nice baseball field and might rent it to COM cheaply.

Interest was expressed in seeing COM have a large Job Fair for local business and industry to connect with COM students.

Communication

Communication in regards to marketing programs and connecting students to job opportunities was mentioned multiple times. One Rotarian who has an air conditioning business expressed frustration that he has tried to connect with COM's HVAC program to hire students and has had difficulty getting a response. He reported that he has successfully hired students from other local community colleges, but not from COM. Multiple of those in attendance also expressed surprise that COM has an HVAC program and questioned if the program has been well advertised.

Another Rotarian brought up that he has contacted COM in the past to list job opportunities for COM students to apply for. He was directed to fill out a web form, but would have preferred to have more direct communication instead.

Facilities

The theme of Facilities came up in multiple comments from the group. It was recommended that COM work on updating equipment, computers, and the aesthetics and structure of the campus in order to be more attractive to those in the community.

One Rotarian in attendance specifically mentioned the facilities of the Music department being somewhat neglected and deficient. There is a need for bigger facilities, updated sound and recording



equipment, and new auditorium spaces. She noted that her child went through the music department at COM and that students who want to transfer to a 4-year school for music need to be able to make better quality recordings of their work.

Summary and Next Steps

Overall, those in attendance were positive about College of the Mainland and its place in the community. There were positive comments regarding existing programs such as the Police Academy, PTECH, Collegiate High School, and Dual Credit, as well as suggestions for possible workforce focused programs. It became clear there is a need for more dedicated focus on career services and connecting with local business and industry that could hire COM students. Those in attendance also commented on the need to update the facilities at COM and acknowledgement of the need to support a bond for that to happen.

Next Steps - Action Items

Community Suggestions:

- Revive program in League City – job search skills and mock interviews
- Police Academy – Increase diversity of applicant pool
- Programs
 - o Dental Hygienist
 - o 4-year Nursing degree
- Athletics Program
 - o Baseball

Action Items:

- Career Services
 - o Designate/hire career services point person
 - Develop relationships with local businesses and industry
 - Communicate with local businesses who want to hire COM students
 - Organize and maintain job listings database
 - Develop ongoing initiatives to support job search skills
 - Resumes
 - Mock Interviews
 - o Job Fair
 - o Municipal Partnership
 - Career paths in local government
- Update facilities and technology
 - o Clear communication regarding bond
 - o Music department space and equipment
- Programs
 - o Determine viability of suggested programs
 - Dental Hygienist



- 4-year Nursing degree
- PTECH
 - focus on development of work ethic
- Police Academy
 - Increase diversity
 - Encourage further pursuit of education towards end of program
- HVAC
 - Advertise more effectively
 - Response to businesses who want to hire students