



College of Alameda President Search Listening Session Report:

Date: March 11, 2024

Participants:

- In-Person: 35 (in 3 groups)
- Zoom: 59 (in 3-7 breakout rooms)
- Facilitator: Dr. Helen Benjamin, HSV Inc.

Purpose:

The Listening Session was conducted to gather insights from faculty, staff, administrators, and students of the College of Alameda in preparation for the search for a new college president. The session aimed to identify key issues facing the college, desirable characteristics and traits of the next president, and the strengths of the institution.

Summary:

The Listening Session conducted at the College of Alameda on March 11, 2024, engaged 94 participants, including both virtual and in-person attendees. The session provided an opportunity for employees to voice their concerns, expectations, and perspectives regarding the upcoming presidential search.

Key Findings:

I. Top issues facing the College of Alameda

Working in groups, teams were asked to identify two critical issues affecting the College. Following is a synopsis of the key themes identified across the issues identified, listed in order with those most frequently mentioned first.

1. Leadership Turnover and Management Issues:

- Frequent turnover of the president and administrators has led to lack of strategic continuity, too many changes in institutional plans and direction, confusion over processes and procedures, and insufficiently prepared managers.

2. Inadequate Communication, Transparency, and Collaboration:

- Need for more open, transparent communication, especially regarding decision-making and inclusion of all relevant parties. Too many unilateral decisions, insufficient shared governance practices.

3. Diminished Campus Culture and Engagement:

- Desire for a more vibrant and engaging campus environment, including increased activities and overall uplift of the campus. Perceptions of decreased employee morale, potentially stemming from high turnover, lack of engagement and promotional opportunities, and overwork.

4. Facilities, Technology, and Infrastructure Needs:

- Lack of sufficient facilities (e.g., cafeteria, accessible entrances) and technology infrastructure and training due to budget constraints.

5. Enrollment Decline and Class Modality Changes:

- Disruptions in schedules and uncertainty for instructors and students due to changes in class modality, impacting enrollment numbers and class offerings.

II. Expectations for the Next President of College of Alameda

Working in groups, teams were asked to identify desired characteristics/traits for the next president. Following are expectations for the new president based on the key themes identified:

1. Stable and Competent Leadership:

The president will provide stable and competent leadership and ably navigate the multi-college district on behalf of the college. They will establish a steady leadership presence, fostering a sense of stability and confidence within the college community. They will build a team of effective leaders at all levels throughout the college to navigate challenges, inspire trust, and ensure the effective operation of the institution.

2. Communication, Transparency, & Collaboration:

Effective communication, transparency, and collaboration are essential for the president. They will prioritize clear and open communication channels, ensuring that decisions are made transparently and in consultation with stakeholders. By fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity, they will engage faculty, staff, and students in decision-making, leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise to promote positive change.

3. Empathy, Compassion, & Humility:

The president will lead with empathy, compassion, and humility. They will demonstrate genuine care and concern for the well-being of all members of the college community and foster a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected. With humility, they will listen actively, seek feedback, and acknowledge their own limitations, promoting a culture of understanding, and mutual respect.

4. Engagement & Empowerment:

Engagement and empowerment are key priorities for the president. They will actively engage with faculty, staff, and students, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to the college's mission and goals. By providing opportunities for professional development, recognition, and growth, they will inspire a sense of ownership and accountability and foster engagement, innovation, and continuous improvement.

5. Community Engagement & Advocacy:

The president will be deeply engaged in the broader community, advocating for the college's interests and building strong partnerships. They will actively promote the college's values and achievements, mobilizing support and resources to advance its goals. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy efforts, they will enhance the college's reputation, visibility, and impact, strengthening its role as a vital educational and cultural resource.

6. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI):

Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is essential for the president. They will prioritize initiatives that foster a welcoming and inclusive campus environment, addressing systemic barriers and inequities. By promoting diversity in all its forms and ensuring equitable opportunities for all members of the college community, they will cultivate a culture of belonging and respect.

7. Commitment to College of Alameda:

The next president should demonstrate a deep passion and commitment to the College of Alameda and the communities it serves. They will advocate for its success and serve as a dedicated steward of its resources and reputation. With unwavering dedication and enthusiasm, they will inspire others to share in the college's vision and contribute to making it a vibrant and inclusive place for all.

III. Strengths of College of Alameda

Working in groups, teams were asked to identify strengths – positive attributes—of the College of Alameda to inform the recruitment of candidates in the presidential search. Following are expectations for the new president based on the key themes identified:

Great Location: Situated in the charming city of Alameda, our college enjoys a prime location with easy access to amenities and transportation.

Diversity: Our diverse student and employee population creates a multicultural environment that celebrates inclusivity and fosters understanding.

Academic Excellence: We pride ourselves on providing top-notch academic programs and robust student support services, leading to high transfer rates and student success.

Collaborative Community: At College of Alameda, collaboration is key. Our close-knit community of faculty, staff, and students works together harmoniously towards shared goals.

Accessibility: With small class sizes, easy commuting options, and free parking, accessibility is a priority, ensuring that everyone can benefit from our offerings.

Campus Environment: Our campus, the only community college on an island, offers a safe, welcoming, and beautiful environment conducive to learning and growth.

Outstanding Programs: From job-oriented programs to exceptional instructional and student services, our college offers a wide array of outstanding opportunities for personal and professional development.

Community Engagement: We actively engage with the vibrant community of Alameda, enriching our campus life and contributing to the cultural fabric of the city.

Talent Development: College of Alameda is committed to developing talent and nurturing the potential of every individual, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their highest potential and dreams.

Conclusion:

The insights gathered from the Listening Session provide valuable guidance for the presidential search process at the College of Alameda. Addressing the identified issues, seeking a candidate with the desired characteristics, and leveraging the institution's strengths will be crucial in selecting a president who can lead the college effectively into the future.

Thanks to all the participants and staff who made this Listening Session possible!