Environmental Scan of Social, Regulatory, and Technological Environments – 2018

Introduction

The information below is compiled to support the college's strategic planning process in the year 2018 with the goal of complementing other components of the environmental scan. The information is organized based on the PEST Analysis (Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Technological changes in the environment).

Economic and parts of what is typically included in socio-cultural scans are included in the report EMSI has prepared for the college. This summary focuses on the remaining pieces of the environmental scan.

Political Factors

While for a typical for-profit business this part is more inclusive of political system, business policy, customer protection and other legislation, etc. in general, the focus here is more legal and regulatory environments for higher education. National and State factors are considered and where needed factors important specifically for community college subsector listed as well.

Factors to be considered are determined to be:

- State of Texas 60x30 Strategic Plan.
- Co-requisite requirements in developmental education by the State of Texas.
- State funding of higher education in general and community colleges particularly.
- Future of performance based funding in the State of Texas.
- Possible deregulation of higher education by the federal government.
- Expected changes to federal financial aid.
- THECB decisions regarding dual credit enrollment.
- THECB decisions regarding additional opportunities or keeping the limitations to offer bachelor degrees.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Population characteristics, employment patterns, and job market trends are usually included in this section. EMSI's report contains those already therefore what listed below are additional factors to be considered:

- Enrollment from different generations: Each generation of students has distinct experiences, learning styles, familiarity with technology, and expectations. [Need to look at our student population by generations.] This is important because the generations' characteristics affect attitudes towards online learning, competency-based education, open educational resources, etc.
    - Baby Boomers (1946-1964)
    - Gen X (1965-1980)
    - Millennials/Gen Y (1981 – 1994)
    - Gen Y (1995 -)
- Perceptions of the value of a college degree.
- Perceptions of STC [Typically assessed via a community survey.]

Technological Factors

EDUCAUSE publishes every year the findings of its research regarding top issues and trends for IT in higher education. The following three reports cover comprehensively the important technological factors to be considered:

- 2018 NMC Horizon Report: https://library.educause.edu/resources/2018/8/2018-nmc-horizon-report
- 2018 Top 10 IT Issues: https://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/research/top-10-it-issues-technologies-and-trends/2018
- Higher Education's Top 10 Strategic Technologies and Trends for 2018: https://library.educause.edu/resources/2018/1/higher-educations-top-10-strategic-technologies-and-trends-for-2018

A few technologies/trends/issues from the above sources that are more directly related to offerings and services to students are:

- Active learning classrooms
- Incorporation of mobile devices in teaching and learning
- Technologies for improving analysis of student data
- Technologies for planning and mapping student educational plans