



PRESIDENT SEARCH 2024-2025

REPORT OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION & SURVEY

Purpose

In preparation for the search for a new college president for Fresno City College (FCC), a hybrid Listening Session and online Survey were conducted to gather insights from all interested faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community members. These open opportunities were designed to draw out constituent perspectives regarding key issues facing the college, desirable characteristics and expectations for the next president, and the overall strengths of the institution.

Findings from these sources will be used to inform the development of the Presidential Search Profile, as well as the screening and interview processes. An invitation to participate was extended from the Chancellor to all college constituents and also posted on the FCC Presidential Search webpage.

Community Listening Session

October 8, 2024

Participants: 39 (13 in person, 26 online)

Facilitators: Dr. Helen Benjamin, HSV Inc. in person; Dr. Cindy Miles, online

Working in groups of 3 to 5 (in person and online), teams were asked to respond to questions to elicit key issues facing FCC that a new president would need to address, characteristics desired in a new president, and strengths of FCC that would attract an exceptional leader.

Community Feedback Survey

October 10-15, 2024

Participants: 43

To extend the opportunity more broadly for participation, an online survey was developed following the Listening Session, and an additional invitation from the Chancellor was emailed to all college constituents and posted on the FCC Presidential Search webpage. Participants submitted anonymous open-ended responses to the same three prompts used in the Listening Session.

Key Findings

Drawing from both listening session focus group and survey data, key themes were identified for each of three feedback prompts, using responses from the 52 total respondents. The following is a synopsis of the predominant topics and areas of concern and interest that emerged from thematic data analysis, along with descriptions based on direct constituent feedback. Findings are listed in order from those most frequently mentioned to those associated with fewer responses.

1. What are the big picture issues facing Fresno City College that would require the leadership and attention of a new college president?

Key Priorities for the New President

1. Building Transparency and Trust in Decision-Making and Budget Allocation

Advancing more open and clear communication about budgetary decisions, resource distribution, and overall governance processes to rebuild trust, increase morale, and foster a culture of transparency. Modeling accountability and visibility in all leadership decisions by engaging faculty, staff, and students in decision-making, and leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise to promote positive change.

2. Revitalizing Campus Culture and Sense of Community

Creating a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for faculty, staff, and students. Restoring a sense of community, addressing low morale, and eliminating division across departments and sites are priorities to make FCC a place where employees feel they are part of a positive, cohesive environment rather than just working for a paycheck.

3. Increasing Student Success and Community Alignment

Aligning college priorities with the unique needs of the Fresno area. Engaging local community groups, understanding student backgrounds, and working with K-12 and higher education institutions to improve pathways, support services, and success rates across all student demographics.

4. Strengthening Shared Governance and Faculty/Staff Engagement

Establishing a culture that respects and values the voice of faculty and staff to support shared governance. Addressing concerns over micromanagement and fostering an environment where faculty and staff have the autonomy and respect needed to best serve students.

5. Investing in Staffing, Technology, and Infrastructure

Tackling pressing needs for balancing needs for staffing in key support areas, up-to-date technology, and modernized facilities. Improving infrastructure and ensuring the college is equipped to support students, faculty, and staff effectively will be central to sustaining a functional, resilient institution.

6. Empowering Student-Centered, Bottom-Up Solutions

Solving long-standing problems with clearer, more efficient processes by promoting faculty- and staff-led solutions and reducing administrative burdens. Streamlining procedures and communicating a commitment to support student-centric approaches through employee engagement and development to foster creativity and innovation.

7. Enhancing Student Support through Guided Pathways and Essential Services

Expanding critical services (e.g., food assistance, digital access) and student support programs to increase retention and success rates. Prioritizing initiatives like Guided Pathways to provide clear academic routes and improve access to essential resources will require a targeted commitment.

A new president who can address these key issues will help FCC continue to build a transparent, equitable, and student-focused environment that also values and empowers its employees and inspires a sense of ownership, accountability, and continuous improvement.

II. What characteristics do you wish to see in the next president? What expectations do you have of them?

Desired Presidential Characteristics

1. Integrity and Courage

Integrity and a strong moral compass consistently stand out as vital traits desired in the new president. Constituents emphasize the need for courage to maintain one's integrity, honestly and consistently, even in challenging situations. Courage is highlighted as an asset for a leader willing to make difficult choices, as well as to hold everyone, including senior leaders, to the same high standards.

2. Equity-Minded and Community-Centered

With a focus on Hispanic and Asian American Pacific Islander-serving experience, constituents call for a president who deeply understands FCC's student demographics and community context and champions FCC's commitment to having an inclusive, equitable campus culture. This includes an ability to build community connections on behalf of FCC's diverse populations.

3. Advocate for FCC's Priorities and Students

Constituents highlight a desire for a president who can advocate robustly for FCC and its students, especially within the district framework. This suggests a need for assertiveness in ensuring FCC's needs and priorities are represented and valued, coupled with creative resource development to support activities to advance equity-centered student success.

4. Campus Connection and Commitment to FCC

Stakeholders expect their president to be intentionally present, mentally and physically, as well as to engage personally with faculty, staff, and students to build rapport and reinforce a sense of connection within the FCC community. Ideally, the next president should demonstrate a long-term commitment and passion for Fresno City College and its community to lead the college with care and dedication.

5. Visionary and Competent Leadership

The college needs a president who can establish a bold, strategic vision and effectively guide FCC from concept to execution. Constituents desire strong, steady leadership to harness new ideas, advocate for the college, and turn initiatives into meaningful outcomes aligned with the institution's mission.

These themes reflect a deep need for a strategic, culturally competent, and skilled president who will decisively address FCC's needs, embody authenticity, and actively engage the campus community while holding themselves and other college leaders to high standards of transparency and accountability. The ideal president will establish a steadfast leadership presence and foster stability and confidence within the college community.

III. What are the strengths of Fresno City College? What is it about the college that would attract an exceptional leader?

Fresno City College's Strengths

1. Community and Regional Connection

Strong, supportive community: FCC's surrounding community is loyal and deeply connected to the college, creating a collaborative environment that values FCC's impact.

Cultural diversity: The college benefits from a culturally rich, ethnically diverse population in Fresno and the Central Valley, offering unique social and cultural variety.

Regional influence: FCC is located in the "heart of California," with strong ties to both urban and rural environments, a historic presence, and proximity to major natural landmarks.

2. Student-Centered Focus

Commitment to student success: FCC emphasizes student-centered approaches and is committed to maximizing opportunities for all students, reflected in high transfer rates, dual enrollment, and dedicated student support services.

Equity and accessibility: The college's focus on equity-driven initiatives and social justice supports many diverse student populations, including first-generation and military veteran students, providing a supportive and inclusive environment.

3. Academic and Programmatic Excellence

High-quality academic programs: FCC has a reputation for excellent academic and technical programs (and a new bachelor's degree option) that are highly relevant to the community's needs.

Skilled faculty and staff: The college attracts high-quality faculty and dedicated classified professionals who are deeply invested in the mission and success of students, creating a positive and engaged campus atmosphere.

4. Historical Legacy and Positive Reputation

Established history: FCC is the first community college in California and the second in the U.S., with a strong sense of tradition and a reputation for academic quality that resonates statewide.

Good reputation: Across California, FCC is known for its resilient, resourceful community and commitment to high standards, positioning it as a distinguished institution among community colleges.

5. Fiscally Sound and Growth-Oriented

Financial stability: FCC is fiscally sound, providing a solid foundation for future growth and innovation in serving students and the community.

Opportunity for growth: With increasing enrollment and support from the Central Valley for further educational opportunities, FCC is well-positioned for entrepreneurial initiatives and expanding programs that meet community needs.

6. Athletics and Extracurricular Success

Successful athletic programs: FCC's athletics are a point of pride, contributing to the college's community connection and fostering school spirit.

Engaged campus life: The campus offers a welcoming environment with diverse extracurricular activities, events, and a positive atmosphere, enhancing the overall student experience.

These strengths showcase FCC as a vibrant, well-respected institution with a strong community commitment, a history of student success, and ample potential for future growth—qualities likely to attract a visionary and dedicated president ready to lead FCC into its next phase.

Conclusion:

The insights gathered from the Listening Session and Survey provide valuable guidance for the presidential search process for Fresno City College. Identifying candidates who can address the identified issues, demonstrate the desired characteristics, and leverage the institution's strengths are essential elements in the search process. These findings will be invaluable in the selection of a president to best support the FCC faculty, staff, students, and community with care and dedication and to lead the college into its brightest possible future.

Thanks to all the participants and staff who contributed by participating or supporting the Listening Session and Survey process!