Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to gather feedback from the Energy Industry leaders: BNI Coal, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Great River Energy, MDU Resources Group Inc., Minnesota Power, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., ND Department of Commerce, ND Petroleum Council, Sinclair Oil, Tesoro, U.S. Senator Kent Conrad’s Office and Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Company.

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Group: Energy Industry leaders
Date: October 20, 2011
Tool: Questionnaire & SWOT
# Attendees: 15

Questionnaire

What are the most vital values that BSC should preserve?

- Connections to energy industry
- Alignment to industries in area
- Affordable education
- Valued students in workforce
- The quality of education due to size i.e. not too big, not too small
- Keep focus on good 2 year degrees as key part of overall strategy
- Relationships interaction with industry/employers
- Appreciation/recognition of staff
- Personable – student connection – professional
- BAS program
- Good individual student attention, good customer service by faculty & staff, nice campus atmosphere, responsive to industry needs
- Strength in the basics – math, calculus, physics, chemistry, organics – linkage to 4 year institutions, operator/maintenance technicians
- Quality of education
- Educate students for careers
- Community-minded, adaptability to the needs of industry, progressive
- “real world skills” education
- Low cost
- Linkage/partnerships with industry connection to other universities
- I currently serve, and have served, on a variety of advisory committees and boards at BSC, e.g., Workforce Training, Energy Generation Conference, Tech Prep. It is important that BSC continues to stay in touch with and involve their business partners in an advisory capacity.
- Affordable, responsive to industry needs, strong community presence
The values that seem representative of our partnership include:

- quality,
- flexibility and
- responsiveness to clients and students.
- shared responsibility for successful adult learning

Responsiveness to customer needs and desires (both in timing and course content). This has distinguished BSC from other training institutions.

**How would you describe the quality of education provided by BSC?**

- Well rounded
- Strong hands-on skills
- Adaptable
- Very good
- Second to none
- Students are receiving a progressively better education than in past years
- Very good. Students are well-prepared for industry careers or moving on to higher ed degrees in STEM related courses
- Solid
- Excellent
- Based on my daughter’s experience, I’m very impressed
- Adequate
- Solid and linked to existing opportunities
- I can only speak to the workforce training and energy education curriculums, e.g., apprentice training, welding training with the welding trailer, Power Plant and Process Plant Technology. The classes in these programs are excellent. Basin Electric is actively involved in helping design and review curriculum so that the material is up-to-date and of the best quality.
- From my limited perspective, excellent.
- From the perspective of our engagement, we measure quality by the students who have completed their coursework and credentials from the BSC online programs. BSC maintains a high focus on quality which is clearly evidenced by their students and graduates.
- Excellent. Personal delivery by instructors is very good.

**How well-prepared are BSC students to enter the workforce? Transfer to other colleges?**

- Transferability & connections with other university/colleges is good and continue
- Very good – both questions
- Very well
- Well-prepared for workforce & college transfer
- Very good – no major concerns
- Excellent in the degrees offered. No knowledge of transfer skills
My experience is that the students are very well prepared for the workforce and/or other college
Not sure
My limited view would be well prepared for both
We have worked closely with BSC to establish the Power Plant & Process Plant Technology Programs as an education requirement for entry level operations & maintenance positions at our North Dakota power plants and gas plant.
From my limited perspective, excellent.
When graduates from some of the online energy programs are surveyed, the results are clear; their BSC online education is an advantage in the workplace. Students often indicate that they are able to use what they are learning in their current position and guide others in their workplace with their new knowledge. Students indicate a higher level of confidence and willingness to solve problems.
Not sure about transfer to other colleges.
I have not had the opportunity to employ recent BSC graduates so I cannot comment on this.

What does BSC need to change that would enable us to be a great institution?

- Continue to stay current with employers needs/trends
- Continue to expand 4-year/management programs
- Integration of depts and resources 1. Tech knowledge 2. Labs
- BSC is somewhat a bedroom college without a vibrant campus life. It may need to have more 4 year students and campus housing/activities to make that transition
- Tighten relationship from “high school potential student” to “direct industry need”
- Better coordination and partnerships within the university system. They currently all have their own turf
- I’d like to see BSC seek more alliances with the various energy companies in the area. I think you’d have willing volunteers & funding partnerships
- Work ready students with practical experience
- Students with customer service & communication & work ethic skills
- Continue to deepen industry relationships & other higher education
- How do you attract more students?
- Your recognition as a National Energy Education Center of Excellence gives you national and international credibility and exposure. It will be an ongoing challenge for BSC to meet the requests for programs and innovatively provide curriculum to meet the needs of an ever changing energy industry.
- Higher salaries to attract teaching staff
- You mean “greater” institution!
- BSC could benefit from being more open to new partnership ideas, and creating innovative ways to disseminate their curriculum. With new CC+CC partnerships and some “open” source content, their reputation would be enhanced!
It would be ideal if BSC could be more proactive with enrolled and students who have stopped out. Evidence today indicates that each student needs to know that the institution really cares about them, and their progress.

Continue to enhance online courses with state-of-the-art interactive learning options.

Continue to look for ways to expand footprint outside of North Dakota.

What are some emerging issues that you anticipate BSC will have to deal with effectively if it is going to thrive in the future (e.g., role of technology in the classroom, retirements, tenure, demographics, online educations)?

- Timing of employer retirements
- Expansion of online educations
- Adapting to new technologies
- Expectations and pressure to have very competent and effective professors/instructors
- Flexibility to adjust curriculum offerings as workforce needs change
- Increase use of technology and outreach, particularly in the western half of ND is important. Being the leading educator/trainer of technicians for the burgeoning oil industry is very possible if BSC makes it a focus.
- Obviously technology simply to attract the students
- Technical skills demanded by the energy industry – 60 hours to 6 days or weeks doesn’t match with university goals
- Technology, online education, effectively attracting diversity
- Student housing
- Consumer technology in workplace
- Baby boomer decline and retirements
- Staffing will be a continual challenge—finding quality instructors, instructional designers, and curriculum developers.
- ??
- The future will demand, finding innovative approaches to offer free open courseware. It seems possible to create short courses that students could benefit from without giving away full courses.
- Increase options for employers to access online courses within the company online platform, example LMS system.
- I do not know the mix of classroom students and on-line students. I see the future being more on-line if BSC is going to expand its footprint outside of North Dakota. On-line opportunities would be not only for students wishing to obtain a 2-year associates degree, but for independent energy companies who do not have internal training departments, personnel, or technology. Therefore, it would be good for BSC to do a critical assessment of its capabilities both in organization and personnel to support this growth in technology.
How can BSC maintain or manage its growth?

- Maintain strong industry contacts and input channels
- Competitive pay/benefits
- A rewarding experience for both students & staff
- Hire retired “experts” from industry and business community
- Likely rapidly expanding online training opportunities to emerging/developing countries
- Perhaps expand online training to foreign languages
- Partners with other state colleges to provide education to their local setting and their local industry
- More student housing and maintaining quality instructors and facilities is important to growing BSC. Success with (will?) breed further success.
- Private partners
- Develop a relationship with EERC – Applied Research
- The product always has to come first. Growth at the expense of the student isn’t worth it in the long run
- Stay focused on simple mission/vision statement
- Plan, prepare and adjust
- It will be critical to also maintain a quality infrastructure, such as IT systems. There have been problems in the past with constant IT upgrades that are never quite done and fully functioning. Strong internal leadership of the functional areas is also critical.
- Don’t try to be everything to everybody.
- No comment.

What should BSC do to attract students?

- Career/education days centered around public schools vacation days
- Classroom connections with local high schools
- Promote/provide services for job placement when students graduate
- Guide students for their career planning
- Advertise job placement opportunities
- Reach students through social media, if they visit and see the campus and career opportunities they will come
- Get into the classrooms at jr high & high school not just booths at career days
- Given the large amount of positive press ND has received nationally, advertising the ND energy programs in-state and in adjoining states (MN, IA, WI, SD, WY, MT) would be good
- High school guidance counseling appears non-existent to me as a parent of a senior in high school – big opportunity – come here to get the basics and get them well
- Provide quality degrees and work high schools and PARENTS
- I’d be interested in creative industry/institutional alliances for students to more effectively map a career path
- BSC is more significant than I think most people think
Tie to internship/ job opportunities
K-12 linkage?
Opportunity identification for career counseling
Marketing for online programs is an international effort and will require dedicated staff that know the programming, can establish industry contacts, and maintain them.
Look at ways to partner with organizations such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, FFA, Science Olympiad, etc.
Continue the work with specific industry sectors across the country.
Promote employment related results. Track and promote results of BSC graduates (especially within energy) employment, promotion, salary increase, etc.
There is an opportunity for BSC to market itself with independent energy companies nationwide to advance their training. In the petroleum refining sector, this would be with companies like Sinclair, Tesoro, Western, HollyFrontier, NCRA, Coffeyville Resources, Hunt Refining, etc.

How can BSC better contribute to our community? How can BSC become more visible in the community and the region?

- Do an excellent job today advertisements, involvement, growth/promotion of new programs
- Not sure – maybe more advertising?
- Solicit local industry to man booths
- More open houses of facilities and programs, more advertising, inviting private industry participation on boards, etc.
- I believe any outreach that attracts people to the campus and its programs will help
- Advertising students & careers/success
- Placement %s and job salary publications of graduates
- The effort by the Presidents to establish coordinated programming between BSC, University of Mary, and United Tribes Technical College for an Institute for Culture & Public Service is an outstanding idea, and deserves local, regional, and national attention if done appropriately.
- BSC is doing well in this category.
- No comment

S-W-O-T

**STRENGTHS**
- Faculty Engagement (Industry Knowledge) ***
- Student/instructor ratio
- Industry responsiveness & relationship ***
- Location (geographic) ****
- Facilities ***
- Faculty/student relationships *
- Armed forces/International reach
- Economic – cost of education ****
- Linked to existing opportunities
- Educate students for careers (jobs) **
- Size/feel of campus *
- Operator/crafts degrees
- Private partners
- BHS Tech Center *
- Strong industry ties
- Adapting programs to industry needs
- Forward thinking
- Facilities & technology
- Industry contacts
- Nice comfortable campus; not threatening to high school students
- Top notch facility, quality professors and real experience and good partnership with private sector.
- Online system is excellent
- Accessible
- Economical
- Inclusive
- Generally on point with energy industry needs
- Size (not too big or too small)
- Faculty (some)
- Located in an area with significant job growth
- Demonstrated track record with industry (power process, etc)
- Your online curriculum expertise is a definite advantage.
- Community collaborations
- Cutting edge
- Well-rounded with sports, arts
- Great location
- Strong leadership
- Community supportive
- Great at listening and responding to employer needs.
- Friendly with partners and students
- Providing curriculum that is up-to-date and changes with the industry needs.
- Increased effort in communicating marketing and promotion strategies.
- Willingness to partner on various projects; grants, community college partnerships, industry initiatives.
**WEAKNESSES**

- It’s cheap – it’s close – I don’t know what else to do
- Oversupply of energy students compared to local needs
- Integration of programs
- Lacking vibrant campus life (everybody goes home for the weekend) **
- Limited 4-yr. stem degrees
- Ability to attract additional students
- Lacking sense of pride in being a BSC student/graduate **
- Concerns about stepping on other universities turf
- Parent perception
- Good cost effective education for many workforce needs & good base to move on to other degree programs
- Students want jobs in local area
- Challenges when placing in other parts of country
- CSP – Certified Safety Professional 4 yr degree 2 power process + 2 safety
- Instructor field experience
- Instructor field interviews with past students & industry staff
- Not perceived as a “four year degree”
- Natural path
- University system constraints
- I don’t believe the college is as widely known as it should be relative to the programs offered or its significance
- “junior college” reputation
- Need to develop sense of pride in being a BSC student/graduate (not “well I can always go to BSC as a backup”)
- Ability to attract instructors and/or students
- As your energy curriculum gains continuing recognition worldwide, it will be a challenge to hire the staff who can maintain the quality of programming.
- Limited resources provided by state government
- BSC sometimes appears rigid and protective.
- Being proactive in collaboratively brainstorming solutions and/or ideas

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Certified safety proff on staff *
- Oil & gas supply trained tech. **
- Diesel tech program/partner with NDSUS
- On-line programs *
- Provide gap analysis for industry pre-hire ***
- Further develop internship program **
- Jr. high/high school involvement
• Good solid guidance counseling for high school seniors ***
• Not a pathway to a 4 year degree – make it one
• BSC is an unknown **
• Educate parents on BSC career path **
• EERC – Applied Research *
• How do the colleges vs. universities - work together vs. compete**
• Private partnerships *
• Williston State needs BSC’s help/partnership *
• Job placement help at graduation *
• Connections with local company HR dept. – trends, retirements, needs
• Visit with HR dept of local companies for trends, retirements, relaying of job posting info
• Combine grants between colleges to work together
• GAP analysis
• Are we fully leveraging our ND colleges and universities or are they competing against one another. Are there more opportunities to work together? Example EERC at UND and BSC
• Take advantage of the fantastic athletic facilities on campus
• Energy is wide open and needs technical people with training in communications and controls
• Energy industry in western ND
• Higher costs to attend 4-year schools, forcing more students to live at home and attend 2 years at BSC.
• Offer more specialization tracks within degree programs.

THREATS

• Industry hiring prior to education **
• Student housing limited ***
• Retirements
• University System ***
• Stigma of the “2 year” college *
• No federal $
• Perception – are we perceiving excellent in the basics
• Obtain & retain competent & effective instructors *
• Online competition - $ value *
• Funding cuts
• Online competition - $ value compared to others
• A vibrant economy might steal potential students
• Stigma of the “two year” college
• Energy industry in western ND – why go to school with good paying jobs available?
• Industry hiring prior to education (doing their own)
• Costs rising
• Federal student loan changes or not keeping up with costs
• Oilfield jobs attracting young adults
• Attracting good instructors
• Maintaining market share when there are any more competitors offering the same courses/degrees as BSC.

KEY STRATEGIC THOUGHTS

• Ideal opportunity to capitalize on oil field needs (special certification)
• More/stronger connections with EERC
• Partner with/university system & EERC
• See BSC as a major stepping stone – not “Plan B” – communication
• Guidance counselors
• Guidance – kids need to know what jobs are
• Parental advising
• Getting weeded out at UND/NDSU – need them in Energy at BSC
• Capitalize on careers in Energy in neighboring states
• BSC/WSC partnership