

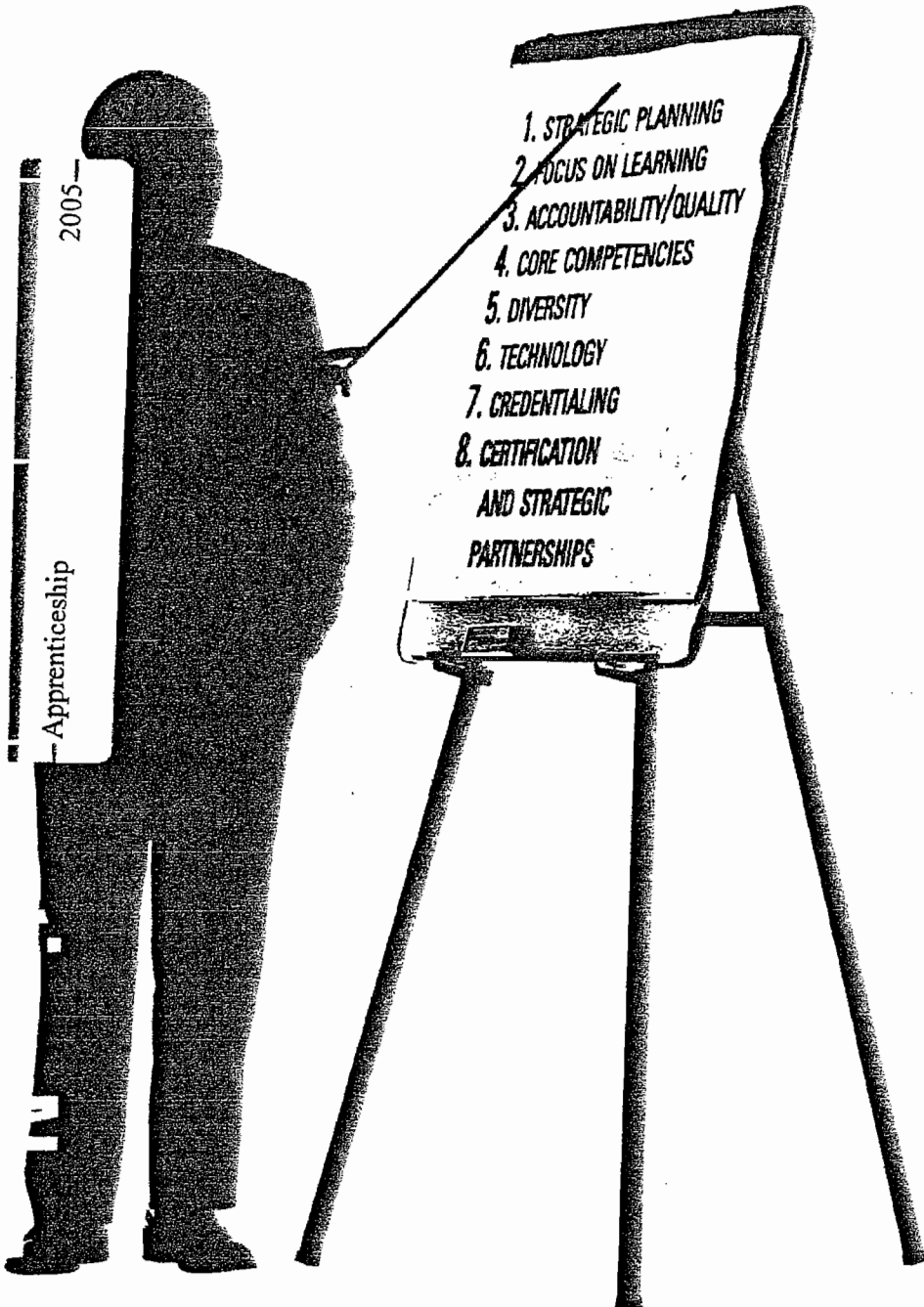
The U.S. Department of Labor is charged with training and preparing the nation's workforce and developing standards for safe and healthy work environments. Apprenticeship programs and community colleges can help achieve these goals, in the midst of demographic, economic and technological changes.

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# New Trends in Training and Education

by Irving Pressley McPhail

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As a member of the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship, this conference has special significance for me. The U.S. Department of Labor's Advisory Committee exists to provide advice and assistance to the secretary of labor in implementing apprenticeship policies and regulations, training and skill preparation for the nation's workforce, and developing standards for safe and healthy work environments. Like community colleges, the committee is taking into consideration national trends as it looks to meet future workforce needs. As I address some of the national trends, I hope to show you how apprenticeship programs and community colleges can partner to aid the committee in meeting those needs.

I will look at some national trends and then more specifically at those impacting education and training. I will use my community college, the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) as a point of comparison, but you could substitute my institution's experience for the one in your own backyard.

There are several areas in which trends are impacting our nation. We are seeing demographic changes, social changes, economic changes and technological changes. Each is impacting the way we run our programs and institutions.

## Demographic Changes

Our nation is increasingly becoming more diverse. The U.S. Census Bureau calculates that there are 33 million foreign-born persons now living in the United States. The foreign-born population now makes up 11.8% of the U.S. population. This is proof that our immigrant population is steadily increasing. Nevertheless, lower birth rates and an aging society will

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Robert E. Jesinger.  
*Employee Benefit Issues: The Multi-employer Perspective—2004*, 2005 edition, pp. 33-36.  
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contribute to a shortage of workers in the near future. By 2020, 40% of Americans will be more than 45 years old and about 15% will be over age 65. Only 40% of our citizens will be in the prime working years. These changes, combined with the changes that are coming from an increasingly competitive world economy, are putting increased demands on training and education.

Take a look at our impending crisis. By 2010 there will be 167,754,000 jobs and only 157,721,000 workers, leaving a ten million shortage of workers (Herman). Roger Herman, strategic business futurist, says the combination of demographics and the number of jobs the economy might need will create a very competitive world for the worker. Herman suggests smart employers must be strategic and focused. More than ever, we must concentrate on retaining and developing workers.

**Social Trends**

Social trends are impacting the way we do business. We are seeing changing educational levels for job entry, changing educational opportunities and changing family structures. The growth in specialized licensure and certification has changed job entry requirements, often bypassing the need for a bachelor's degree. From massage therapy to Microsoft engineers, certifications are often the key to employment for well-paying jobs. We are also seeing that learning is no longer confined to educational institutions. Private industry is creating "Corporate Universities" within its organizations. Professional and trade organizations are also offering training and certifications.

The growth of educational opportunities is tremendous and it is fueled by increased needs among individuals and families. The traditional family structure of a two-parent household is no longer the norm. We have more single parent households and extended families where parents are not only caring for their children but aging parents as well, thereby limiting their opportunities to pursue an education. Education and training must be flexible to meet these changing social trends.

**Economic Trends**

In order to be competitive we must think beyond our own borders. Those who are most successful will learn how to

maneuver within our global society. Some would be surprised to know that a major American fast-food chain (McDonalds) is reported to operate one of its biggest establishments in Shanghai, China (28,000 square feet, 700 people, two kitchens and 28 cash registers). It's just one example of how businesses and industries are conducting business globally.

Manufacturing in the United States is also doing big business and facing fierce competition overseas. Think of all the manufacturers that face tough competition from Japan and more recently China. Industry reports say that Toyota is planning to produce nearly 100,000 cars a year in China.

A pool of well-educated and well-trained individuals is a major drawing card for business and industry. In the business sector, "location, location, location" used to mean highways, ports and available utilities. Now, more often than not, it means a readily available, skilled workforce. At CCBC we're trying to make sure we have a vast pool of well-educated and trained workers in order to draw big business to the area.

**Technology Trends**

Technology is moving at the speed of light. In higher education we must keep up with those changes in order to meet workforce needs. Technology now provides an opportunity for millions of people to work from home via telecommuting. This creates a savings of time and expenses to the worker and the employee. It's also a great employer benefit for retention.

In higher education technology is changing the face of instruction. Sometimes a "face" isn't even required. Students can now take courses or complete full programs online—never entering a classroom. The Internet is also changing education via the way students seek information. Students who once relied on the library for research now rely on the Internet, where they can find information on almost any topic.

What do all these trends mean for those of us involved in education and training? It means we must change with the times in order to meet our nation's workforce needs. How do we do that? I've identified eight key trends that are in response to these national trends. Those trends are strategic

planning, a focus on learning, accountability/quality, core competencies, diversity, technology, credentialing and certification, and strategic partnerships.

### Strategic Planning

When it comes to training and education, it's important to think strategically. There's no room for haphazard decisions. In order to develop a strategic plan you must have a strong vision and a clear mission. Based on that vision and mission, you must then develop a solid strategy that has measurable results.

At CCBC, we rely heavily on our strategic plan. The plan incorporates the principles of the learning college into a series of strategic directions that has transformed CCBC into a premier, learning-centered institution. During the early stages of the planning process, I reviewed existing planning documents and materials from previous college task forces and conducted interviews with personnel throughout the college. Relying on this thorough research, in addition to our strong vision and mission, is what led to the development of CCBC's first five-year strategic plan that we call *LearningFirst*. This plan provides the road map for our institution. Today you see more and more community colleges relying on strategic planning. Much like corporate America, you must have a well-planned road map to gain positive results.

### Focus on Learning

Student learning is at the focus of all that we do at CCBC. When we were developing our strategic plan, we asked ourselves the following questions:

- How does this action improve and expand student learning?
- How do we know this action improves and expands student learning?

This is what the Learning College is all about. Everything emphasizes student learning. You'd be surprised at how many private companies are embracing the "Learning College" as they recognize the value in lifelong learning. CCBC has numerous partnerships with the business community to provide customized training. Employers realize that their future is tied to the ever-increasing need for their employees to learn new processes, new technology and improved work standards.

### Accountability/Quality

The quality of our institution depends on the success of our students. At CCBC we ask the following questions when it comes to outcomes.

- What does the student know?
- What can the student do?

Much like the apprenticeship programs that rely heavily on meeting specific standards in the industry, we aren't successful if our students don't exemplify certain learning outcomes. We must be accountable for what our students know and don't know.

Different organizations have different methods to monitor their accountability but they all have their own "watchdogs" for monitoring outcomes. At CCBC we rely on learning outcomes. K-12 has the "No Child Left Behind" legislation. Vocational and technical education relies on competency-based learning, and apprenticeship programs rely on industry standards. Without mechanisms for measuring our success, it's difficult to prove our value to the world.

### Core Competencies

It is not enough to just acquire specific technical skills—Students and employees need to develop core competencies that will help them survive. These core competencies are the foundation for building the knowledge, skills and behaviors that make successful learners, productive workers and thoughtful, engaged citizens. At CCBC we try to instill in all our students these core competencies. I'm sure that you find these core competencies crucial as well when it comes to apprenticeship programs. The core competencies we rely on include communication skills, problem-solving skills, social responsibility, independent learning, and personal management and intercultural competence. Students and employees who competently maneuver through these core competencies will most likely be more successful.

### Diversity

America's growing diversity cannot be ignored, especially when it comes to training and education. All workers must be prepared to work with others who are different from themselves, have different values and have a different view of life. When we think

of diversity, many times we only think of culture, but diversity is more than that.

Take for instance, age. During the height of the dot.com era, many top managers were from Generation X. Baby boomers had to adjust to working for a younger generation—adapt to their life and work style. Health is also an emerging factor with our aging workforce. Those who are disabled or become disabled while working have special needs. We need to learn how to be sensitive to those needs as well.

In order to deal with diversity within the area of education and training, it means we must do some things differently. We must recognize the differences and then retrain staff so they know how to deal with those differences in our schools and on their jobs.

### Technology

Within education and training we must look at technology through two lenses: as a subject and a tool. Our faculty must keep up with the technological changes so we can adequately prepare our students for the workforce—very much like the apprenticeship programs must keep up with what's new in the industry so their training meets current need. As a tool in teaching, technology is expanding rapidly. It's changing the way we teach. The number of distance-learning courses has increased tremendously. Maryland colleges report a 30-40% increase in online instruction. At CCBC, online instruction has grown 69%. While the trend started in the "soft courses," like liberal arts, we are now putting nursing education and other technical training online. Technology changes the classroom for instructors too. Thanks to distance learning, no longer are they physically confined to the classroom.

### Credentialing

Americans often believe that the threshold credential for the majority of good jobs is a college degree. I'm definitely a proponent of education, but there's been a rise in non-degree-based credentials that can lead to wonderful, well-paying jobs. A 2001 report titled *Help Wanted . . . Credentials Required: Community Colleges in the Knowledge Economy*, pointed out the growing role of new credentials—beyond diplomas, associate degrees and bachelor's degrees in today's economy (Carnevale, Desrochers).