



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
2011 - 2014



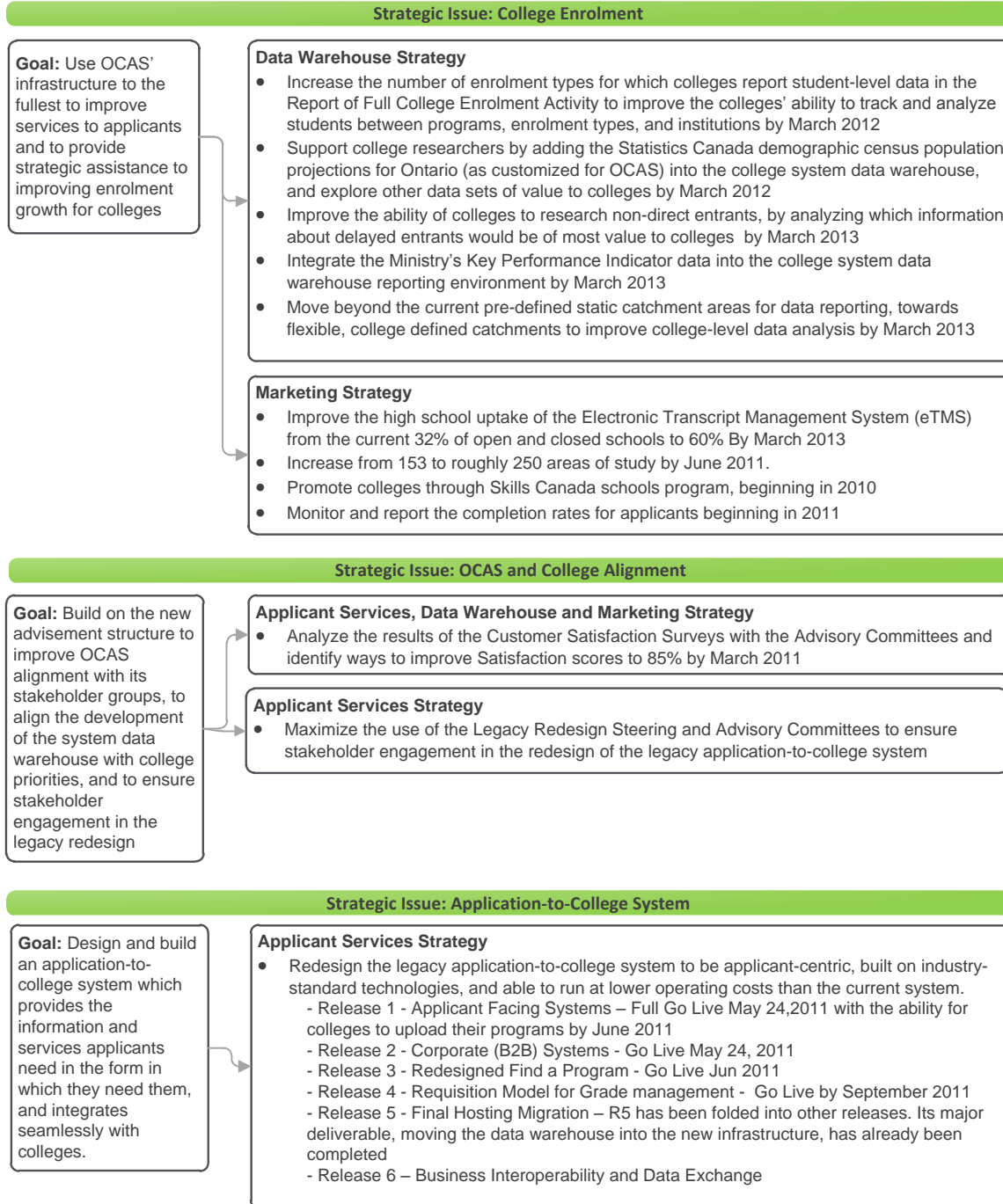
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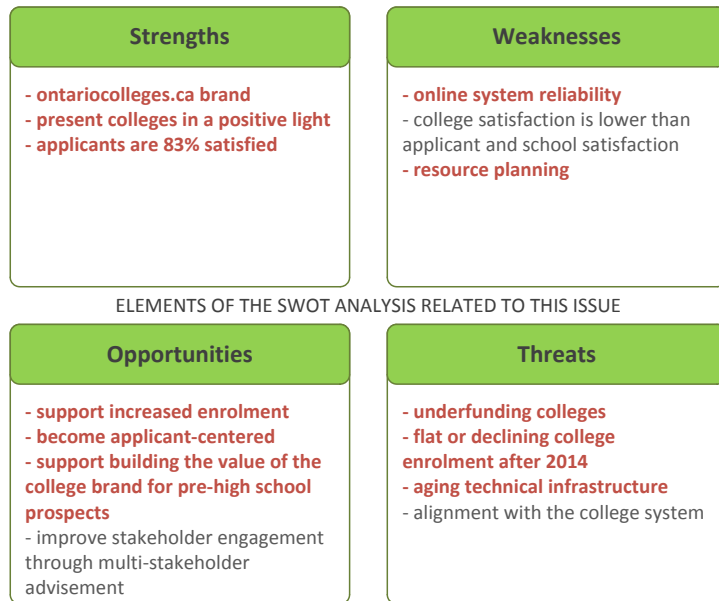
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One Page Summary

This table provides a high-level summary of corporate goals in the left column, and current strategies on the right.



Strategic Issue – College Enrolment



The typical college cohort of 18 – 24 year olds will decline in Ontario beginning in 2014, and the decline will continue, even in the Statistics Canada high growth population projection for Ontario, until 2023. Declining enrolment affects many provinces in Canada, and in the 2008-09 school year, nearly 80% of Ontario school boards (57 out of 72) had smaller student populations than in 2002.¹

At the same time, in 2005 Ontario began to set graduation targets, projecting that by 2010, 85% of high school students would graduate. In 2009, 79% of Ontario

students graduated with a high school diploma. Since 2003-04, increases in the graduation rate have resulted in over 52,500 more young Ontarians earning a high school diploma.² This may help offset the decline in postsecondary enrolment, because more will have the basic qualifications to pursue postsecondary education.

One-third of Ontario's workforce (2.1 million workers) has a college qualification, and the future need for college graduates related to labour shortages is acute, but Ontario's support for colleges does not correspond to their importance to either the current or future provincial economy. Ontario colleges serve 51% more students than they did in 1989-90, but they now receive 29% less in operating funding per student in constant dollars³.

Colleges provide the hands-on learning and practical skills which prepare graduates for the world of work, and over 90 per cent of college graduates find employment within six months. In spite of this success, colleges suffer from a long-standing image problem, as second choice to university, and the refuge of students with lower grades⁴. At the same time, with respect to the future job picture, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that by 2025 Ontario could face a shortage of 364,000 workers⁵ as a result of a workforce whose growth is slowing at the same time that it is ageing.

¹ <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/enrolment.html#overview> from the Declining Enrolment Working Group tab on the Ministry of Education website

² Government of Ontario Newsroom website <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2010/03/ontario-graduation-rates-rise-again.html>

³ Colleges Ontario, Ontario's Colleges: An Overview – Building Ontario's Workforce for the 21st Century, www.collegesontario.org, pp. 2-3.

⁴ Michael Skea, Colleges Ontario: Short Term Marketing Update, June 21, 2007, slide presentation.

⁵ The Conference Board of Canada, Ontario's Looming Labour Shortage Challenges, September 25, 2007, p. 2.

Against this backdrop, OCAS has an opportunity to focus its services to help colleges to improve the enrolment picture, by providing applicants with an experience that reflects the value and status of a college education using an application infrastructure that is generally respected by applicants and their supporters, by supporting colleges to make enrolment planning decisions based on trusted data, and by helping to fill the application funnel.

GOAL - College Enrolment

Use OCAS' infrastructure to the fullest to improve services to applicants and to provide strategic assistance to improving enrolment growth for colleges.

STRATEGIES - College Enrolment

Data Warehouse

1. Align the development plan of the college system data warehouse to the priorities established through the Data Warehouse Advisory Committee survey of colleges in 2009:
 - a) Increase the number of enrolment types for which colleges report student-level data in the Report of Full College Enrolment Activity to improve the colleges' ability to track and analyze students between programs, enrolment types, and institutions
 - Evaluate the feasibility of a student-level data collection for categories of enrolment for which colleges now report aggregate data. If feasible, start collecting the new student-level data by March 2012
 - b) Support college researchers by adding the Statistics Canada demographic census population projections for Ontario (as customized for OCAS) into the college system data warehouse, and explore other data sets of value to colleges
 - Integrate the customized Statistics Canada data set into applicable reports and cubes, and identify other data sets which colleges purchase individually which would be more efficiently purchased by OCAS for the system data warehouse by March 2012
 - c) Improve the ability of colleges to research non-direct entrants, by analyzing which information about delayed entrants would be of most value to colleges, and then collecting and reporting it
 - Determine the data elements of most value to colleges through the Working Group. Create a project to collect and report the new data elements as part of the 2012-2013 project portfolio by March 2012
 - d) Integrate the Ministry's Key Performance Indicator data into the college system data warehouse reporting environment
 - Determine which KPI data is most valued by colleges and how they want it structured in the data warehouse. Deliver a new KPI data mart housing the priority KPI data and enabling cross-tabulation with other data marts by March 2013
 - e) Move beyond the current pre-defined static catchment areas for data reporting, towards flexible, college-defined catchments to improve college-level data analysis
 - Determine the catchment flexibility sought by colleges, and then introduce flexible catchments built on those parameters by March 2013

Marketing

2. Improve the high school uptake of the Electronic Transcript Management System (eTMS) from the current 32% of open and closed schools to 60% by March 2013 to increase the percentage of non-direct applicants who get offers, and to remove a major frustration for non-direct applicants and colleges.
 - The eTMS enables non-direct applicants to obtain prior high school transcripts by ordering them online through OCAS. If an applicant's high school doesn't participate in the eTMS system, getting a transcript can mean returning in person to the home school to obtain a paper transcript, and then mailing it to OCAS who convert it back to the electronic format it was originally in at the school, before the school printed it.
 - Last year, nearly 19,000 non-directs applied during the summer when high schools are closed. Some high schools require prior students to attend in person and produce identification to get a transcript. Other schools require a special arrangement to be made whereby the IT person comes in from holidays to print a transcript during the summer. The school process for transcripts is generally manual, and many school websites provide no clear information on how to obtain transcripts for former students.
 - The failure to produce a transcript is a major reason that non-direct applicants don't get college offers.

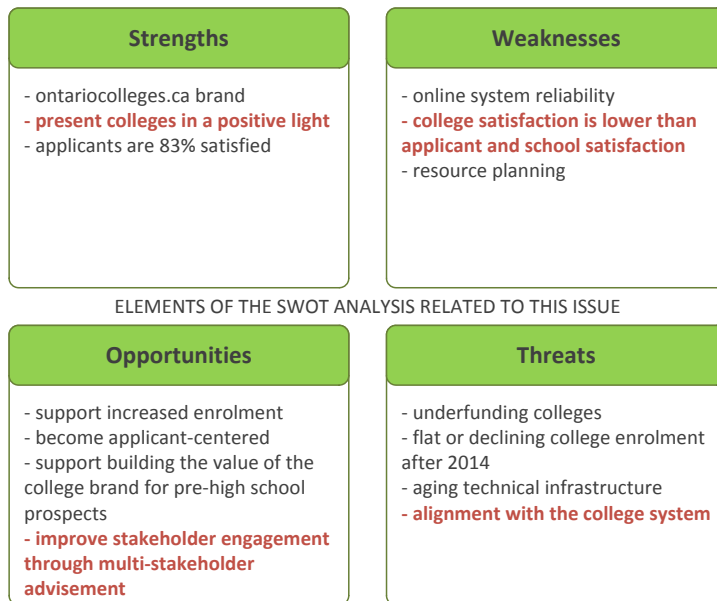
3. Improve pre-application assistance for non-direct applicants by implementing an online career advisement tool which correlates applicant interests and aptitudes to the discreet program areas offered by colleges.
 - We can support non-direct applicants by providing at least high-level career advisement through an online career advising tool which leads applicants directly to our areas of study pages and the colleges which offer programs in each area of study.⁶ The advisement tool will be developed in consultation with stakeholders by June 2011 and then integrated with Find a Program at ontariocolleges.ca by March 2012.

4. Use OCAS' partnership with Skills Canada to promote college as a first-choice destination through the Skills Canada schools program, by distributing OCAS publications relevant to the students being visited, such as the 'College Handbook' and 'Why College?' We will seek feedback from Skills Canada on how the publications are received and make future adjustments to what we provide to them.

⁶ In 2006, the Committee of Presidents established five projects designed to address long-term enrolment issues, one of which was the Review of Recruitment and Admissions Practices Impacting Non-Direct Entrants. The Working Group made the following observation to the Committee of Presidents in a report at the November 4, 2008 Meeting: "Current intake processes (advising, admissions, transcript evaluation, PLAR, transfer credit, and registration) are not responding to the needs of non-direct applicants as effectively as they should to support significant enrolment growth."

- Monitor and report the completion rates for applicants. Each application cycle, thousands of applicants start an application but fail to carry it through to the point that colleges receive information about them.
- Based on an analysis of the completion rates of other centralized application services conducted in 2010, we will monitor and report our completion rates as part of our balanced scorecard to establish norms for applicant completion and triggers for action when completion rates change.

Strategic Issue – OCAS and College Alignment



As OCAS services develop in new areas and change, alignment with colleges has suffered. The first step to rectify this alignment issue was through a new governance and advisement structure introduced in 2008 which comprises advisory committees for applicant services, the data warehouse, and marketing. This structure was evaluated in 2010 at the request of the Committee of Presidents, and the evaluation confirmed that it has been very successful at improving alignment with the broad range of stakeholders which OCAS serves.

In 2010, the more than 24,000 respondents rated their satisfaction with OCAS services as follows – applicants and school staff 83% satisfied and college staff 81% satisfied. ^[1] Our satisfaction target for all groups is 85%, so we are slightly under target for all groups. Last year, we introduced common rating scales for all of our satisfaction surveys, and this enables easier comparison between customer groups.

The three-year project to redesign the legacy application-to-college system presents both an opportunity and a challenge to our alignment with colleges.

GOAL - OCAS and Stakeholder Alignment

Build on the new advisement structure to improve OCAS alignment with its stakeholder groups, to align the development of the system data warehouse with college priorities, and to ensure stakeholder engagement in the redesign of the legacy application-to-college system.

STRATEGY - Alignment

Applicant Services

- Analyze the results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys with the Applicant Services Advisory Committee and identify ways to improve the scores of applicants, high schools and colleges
 - Achieve an 85% satisfaction rating for all surveys by March 2011
- Maximize the use of the Legacy Redesign Steering and Advisory Committees to ensure stakeholder engagement in the redesign of the legacy application-to-college system

^[1] Applicant, School and College Satisfaction Surveys were conducted by the Academica Group

- Include questions concerning satisfaction with stakeholder engagement in the annual college satisfaction survey and report the results to the Steering Committee and Advisory Committees. Take corrective action as required.

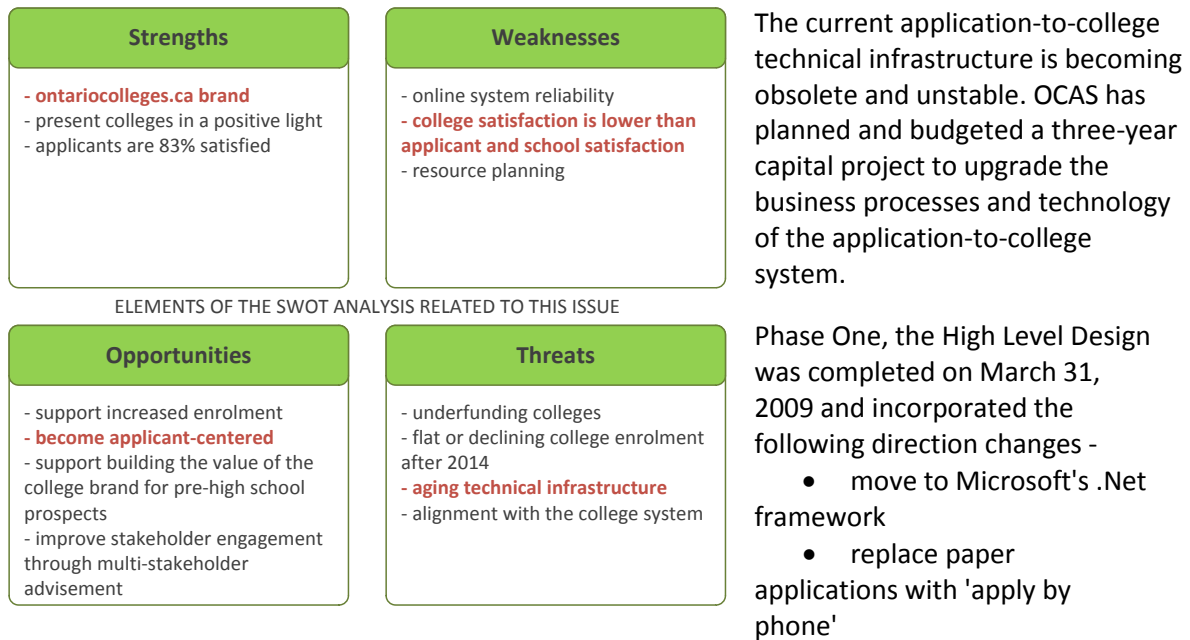
Data Warehouse

- c) Analyze the results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys with the Data Warehouse Advisory Committee and identify ways to improve the scores of applicants, high schools and colleges
 - Achieve an 85% satisfaction rating for all surveys by March 2011

Marketing

- d) Analyze the results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys with the Marketing Advisory Committee and identify ways to improve the scores of high schools and colleges
 - Achieve an 85% satisfaction rating for all surveys by March 2011

Strategic Issue – Application to College System



- enable colleges to create online applications for late admits, Second Career and like programs
- create an online requisition system to collect applicant high school grades
- accept international credential assessments from multiple agencies
- give applicants an online dashboard to track the status of their application
- give applicants the ability to start their application on a college website

The scope for the six releases which comprise the redesign (now reduced to five as one release has been folded into another) has now been finalized and OCAS is working with colleges and schools to build the new infrastructure and plan the implementation.

GOAL - Application-to-College System

Design and build an application-to-college system which provides the information and services applicants need in the form in which they need them, and integrates seamlessly with colleges.

STRATEGIES - Application-to-College System Applicant Services

- 1) Redesign the legacy application-to-college system to be applicant-centric, built on industry-standard technologies, and able to run at lower operating costs than the current system.
 - Adhere to the vision for the redesign developed by the Legacy Redesign Steering Committee, which is that the new application-to-college system will
 - respect applicant privacy by collecting only the information colleges need to complete the application, and will diligently protect personal information thereafter;
 - be
 - intuitive

- tailored to meet the diverse needs of all applicants
 - easy to set up and self-manage
 - accessible via the most common access technologies
 - available through ontariocolleges.ca, a college website, in person at a college, or by telephoning our contact centre
 - informative by providing feedback after each transaction and guidance about next steps
- work all day, every day, at commonly accepted standards of performance and reliability, including on the busiest application day of the year
 - be backed by industry-standard support services, infrastructure and technology;
 - support schools, agencies, colleges and OCAS in assisting college-intenders by providing them with the information and tools they need to be effective in their roles;
 - support college admissions to assist applicants by providing them with comprehensive online information related to applications, supporting documents, academic records, and interactions with OCAS.
- 2) Undertake a multi-year project with college and school stakeholders to redesign the application-to-college system:
- Release 1 - Applicant Facing Systems – Full Go Live May 24,2011 with the ability for colleges to upload their programs by June 2011
 - Release 2 - Corporate (B2B) Systems - Go Live May 24, 2011
 - Release 3 - Redesigned Find a Program - Go Live Jun 2011
 - migrate from Oracle Portal to SharePoint 2010 as our Content Management Solution
 - port the current Find a Program functionality from Java to .NET technology and reconfigure to integrate with the online application
 - port the back-end Endeca engine into Primus hosting
 - continue the current method of College Program Offering, Amendment and Inquiry until Release 6 by moving the current applications for this service to Primus hosting
 - Release 4 - Requisition Model for Grade management - Go Live by September 2011, but it is not likely that all schools will be ready to go-live at once. The project scope is
 - i. Migrate the Electronic Transcript Management System (eTMS) from an Oracle platform and IBM hosting to a Microsoft platform and Primus hosting, such that foundation transactions support the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) XML specifications
 - ii. Migrate the Postsecondary Electronic Transcript Exchange (PETE) from an Oracle platform and IBM hosting to a Microsoft platform and Primus hosting, such that foundation transactions support the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) XML specifications

- iii. Maximize re-usable service-oriented objects in the request, payment, tracking, responding, fulfillment and reconciliation processes of the requisition model for obtaining high school grades
 - iv. Design the system to facilitate non-applicant clients in future, such as those requesting transcript transfers between institutions, even though the scope for Release 4 is applicants
 - v. Update the client's portfolio with a copy of the official document delivered via the requisition process
 - vi. The Postsecondary Electronic Transcript Exchange (PETE) must continue to support requests from colleges or OUAC in both Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and PESC XML formats, and be able to connect to the data hub maintained by the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC)
 - vii. Migrate colleges and OUAC from GXS FTP without the need for partners to change their current FTP software to the Microsoft Platform and Primus hosting
 - viii. Develop only the essential components of the IBM Content Management and Kofax Ascent Capture systems to work in the Microsoft CRM environment including the
 - a. Ability for applicants to upload copies of documents to their portfolio that are not coming directly from official sources
 - b. Ability for OCAS and colleges to upload documents to the Applicant Portfolio
 - c. Migration of documents from IBM content management to CRM for open cycles only
 - ix. Implement the new eTMS process for a pilot group of boards (one from each SIS vendor) using the fully automated eTMS process to retrieve historical transcript and progress updates for direct applicants
 - x. Implement a cumulative progress report for direct applicants for both the new version eTMS and SSLOAD process
- Release 5 - Final Hosting Migration – R5 has been folded into other releases. Its major deliverable, moving the data warehouse into the new infrastructure, has already been completed
 - Release 6 – Post-legacy redesign, this is a project to review how colleges and OCAS exchange information – Sep 2012 (at the earliest)
 - Rollout to Schools and Boards - Begins Jul 2011
 - Implement twenty-six changes recommended by college users on the Committee of Registrars Admissions and Liaison Officers (CRALO) Priorities List;
 - Implement twenty-six changes recommended by college users on the Committee of Registrars Admissions and Liaison Officers (CRALO) Priorities List;
 - eliminate the ability for applicants to apply to closed programs;
 - reduce the potential for applicants to initiate duplicate applications through processes like 'late admit';
 - enable applicants from Quebec to request transcripts electronically through OCAS;
 - expand the grade requisition model for obtaining grades from non-direct as well as direct applicants;

- prevent high school applicants from applying to graduate programs;
 - the applicant's residency status to the applicant versus cycle;
 - reduce the incidence of invalid values for final grades being transmitted to colleges;
 - improve the validity of applicant email addresses through a new validation process;
 - follow-up with applicants regarding missing residency documents;
 - create a paperless late admit process;
 - enable two address fields in the online application;
 - reset the file sequence number for online confirmations back to 1 at the beginning of the next cycle;
 - enable applicants to confirm to multiple terms for the same application cycle;
 - introduce 'preferred method of communication' in online application so colleges know the applicant's preference;
 - enable applicant debit card payments for the online application;
 - Create a message centre on the applicant dashboard and use workflow processes to highlight items on which the applicant requires further action (e.g. would you like to order your transcript now?);
 - Use a requisition process to improve the management of transcripts for both direct and no-direct applicants, and retain the transcripts of the high percentage of applicants who re-apply in successive years;
 - improve address validation services via QAS to improve address quality for colleges;
 - send French and English names and addresses using the full French and English character sets;
 - where fast-track applicant appears to have registered before they applied, offer more frequent transmissions so full applicant data set is available upon registration;
 - add an international study permit flag and graduate status field in the online application;
 - introduce statistical reporting in the Transcript Management System to capture processing times, performance and quality metrics;
 - enable colleges to indicate the entry level of the offer in online confirmations;
 - Provide two address fields so that applicants from groups like the Canadian Armed Services can indicate that they are Canadian residents even though they are serving outside the country;
 - enable colleges to change program codes in the middle of an application cycle, such as happens when the campus changes due to space issues. (Further consultation required.);
 - establish and communicate consistent policies regarding the acceptance of recognized external credential assessment reports.
- Implement four new policy directions which are the consensus outcome of a Policy Conference on May 25, 26 attended by stakeholders:

- Move towards Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) compliance for the High School and College Transcript, Data Transport Standard, and Admissions Application;
 - Add limited new two-way exchange elements to enable applicants to receive status updates that their application was received by the college, to enable college-initiated or assisted applications, and college-initiated applicant information updates;
 - Introduce differentiated service delivery for applicant transmissions to colleges, within parameters agreed by colleges. OCAS will build a flexible delivery infrastructure, able to deliver both batch and real-time applicant data to colleges;
 - Introduce a standards-based catalogue of college programs and an automated XML feed process with regular 'add, delete, change' transmissions from colleges to maintain it.
- Enable a one-year trial of applicants being able to apply to up to five choices at any one college, by removing the cap of three programs at present in place.

Appendix A: Who We Are

Vision

For Ontario's public colleges to be a first choice for postsecondary education.

Mission

To support Ontario's public colleges becoming a first choice in postsecondary education through

- a reliable, applicant-centered information and application-to-college service
- marketing colleges and their programs in an integrated systems approach with Colleges Ontario and colleges
- a College System Data Warehouse which is a trusted source of business intelligence

Values

We value:

- Applicant-centered online and personal services available when they are needed
- Integrated and collaborative marketing of colleges and their programs
- Business intelligence that supports college decision-making
- Consultation and open communication with customers and employees
- Technological innovation that benefits customers
- Respecting the applicant source of our revenue and using it responsibly
- Forging partnerships that benefit our customers
- Protecting the confidentiality of customer information
- Interdepartmental cooperation
- Personal and professional development
- Balancing work and personal life
- Community involvement
- Environmental responsibility

Ownership and Governance

OCAS Application Services Inc. is a non-profit corporation created by Ontario's twenty-four public Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning. The company is governed by a Board of Directors comprising four College Presidents, a College Vice-President and the CEO of OCAS.

The Board is advised by three Advisory Committees which correspond to the three sanctioned areas of activity included in the objects of incorporation, and a Legacy Redesign Steering Committee during the life of the legacy redesign:

- Applicant Services
- Marketing
- Data Warehouse
- Legacy Redesign Steering Committee

Major Clients and Markets

Our major clients and partners are:

- The more than three million visitors to ontariocolleges.ca each year, the hundreds of thousands of prospective applicants and their supporters who research a college education, and the 150,000 who actually apply
- 1,100 Ontario High Schools and their counselors, and their Boards
- 28 public colleges (twenty-four Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning, the three regional campuses of the University of Guelph, and The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences)
- The Association of Colleges, Colleges Ontario
- The Ontario and Federal Governments

Value Proposition

OCAS provides an online gateway for college intenders and their supporters from Ontario and around the world to research and apply to 28 publicly-funded colleges (24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 3 Agricultural Colleges, 1 Applied Health Sciences College). This enables:

- **applicants** to research all colleges and their programs, apply, request transcripts and international credential assessments and receive and accept college offers of admission online, 24 hours per day and 7 days per week;
- **high schools** to supply transcripts for college applicants electronically and to access information about their college applicants to support counselling;
- **colleges** to expose their programs collectively online, to make it easy for applicants to find and compare programs across the college system, and learn about colleges and programs they might not otherwise have considered;
- **researchers** in colleges, Colleges Ontario and government to access a college system data warehouse of enrolment lifecycle and enrolment planning information which exists in no other centralized source;
- **Colleges Ontario** to market and advocate for the college system at a higher level through an annual allocation of application revenue for this purpose.



Key Performance Indicators

OCAS reports its performance quarterly from four perspectives in a balanced scorecard.

Performance measures are based on customer satisfaction, the business processes at which we must excel to satisfy customers, our long-term financial security, and the degree to which we provide employees with the training and tools needed to satisfy customers.

Appendix B: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ontariocolleges.ca brand- present colleges in a positive light- applicants are 83% satisfied

Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- online system reliability- college satisfaction is lower than applicant and school satisfaction- resource planning

ELEMENTS OF THE SWOT ANALYSIS RELATED TO THIS ISSUE

Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- support increased enrolment- become applicant-centered- support building the value of the college brand for pre-high school prospects- improve stakeholder engagement through multi-stakeholder advisement

Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- underfunding colleges- flat or declining college enrolment after 2014- aging technical infrastructure- alignment with the college system

Strengths

Our consumer brand, ontariocolleges.ca presents colleges in a positive light and is generally respected by applicants and their supporters.

In 2010, the more than 24,000 respondents rated their satisfaction with OCAS services as follows – applicants and school staff 83% satisfied and college staff 81% satisfied. ^[1] Our satisfaction target for all groups is 85%, so we near, but slightly under target.

Weaknesses

OCAS' business processes and technical systems for online services are now a mixture of some of the original components like the online application and newer components like the online confirmation system and electronic transcript exchange. System performance is becoming less stable as we add new features onto the old infrastructure, and a system overhaul is needed.

Even though college and high school satisfaction with our services improved last year, our customer satisfaction scores are between 2% and 4% under our target satisfaction of 85%.

Resource planning continues to be an area of attention. We have created a Project Management Office and seconded a trusted senior employee to manage it during the legacy redesign. We have implemented Microsoft Project Server and begun detailed resource planning for all projects.

Threats

College is seen as a 'second choice' postsecondary destination at a time that Ontario faces a skills shortage related to the baby boomer retirements. The typical college cohort of 18-24 year olds will decline beginning 2014 and this decline will also affect universities which means that competition between the two systems will increase.

Our aging technical infrastructure is a threat to reliable performance for online services.

^[1] Applicant, School and College Satisfaction Surveys were conducted by the Academica Group

Development of the brand ontariocolleges.ca has led to conflict with colleges around the role of ontariocolleges.ca in marketing colleges and their programs to various audiences and a various points in the application-to-college process. This threat has been somewhat reduced through the development of a Marketing Protocol in the past year which defines the respective roles of Colleges Ontario, colleges and OCAS in system marketing.

Opportunities

OCAS can do more to help colleges deal with the big challenges they face, such as the image of college as the 'second choice' postsecondary destination, filling the applicant funnel to stem the application decline expected around 2014, and generating data about applicant behaviour to support college recruitment efforts. We need to work with our Marketing Advisory Committee to find ways to reach potential college entrants earlier, before they make the 'college versus university or no postsecondary' decision later in high school.

OCAS services to applicants are college-centred in the sense that they are built around college needs, but we believe that we will serve colleges better by becoming more applicant-centred. Ways that we could be more applicant-centred include providing applicants more information about colleges when they are in the research stage of their application, being able to tell the applicant at any stage in the process the status of their application, and tailoring the application to different applicant segments.

The new advisory structure presents an opportunity to improve our engagement with colleges, and to improve their satisfaction with our services.