

Gathering Thoughts and Insights

Group: Flex Day

Who: Faculty and staff who walked through the open exhibit or participated in the facilitated session

When: August 23, 2019

Venue: Community Rooms

Shared Ideas (responses to the open exhibit and Vision 2031 handout)

- Reskilling of workers on site
- Dual enrollment
- Fast-track pathways
- Credits and badges for work experience
- Paradigm shift from degrees to assumed knowledge; signaling to demonstrate skills through online or brick-and-mortar settings
- College-based database or student-held transcripts (or both) for instant recruitment by employers
- Housing/dorms paired with other social services
- Peer mentors and counselors
- Integrate student support through meta-major aligned learning communities. Have the learning communities focus on supporting students from onboarding through their time at ARC and on through transfer/career entry.

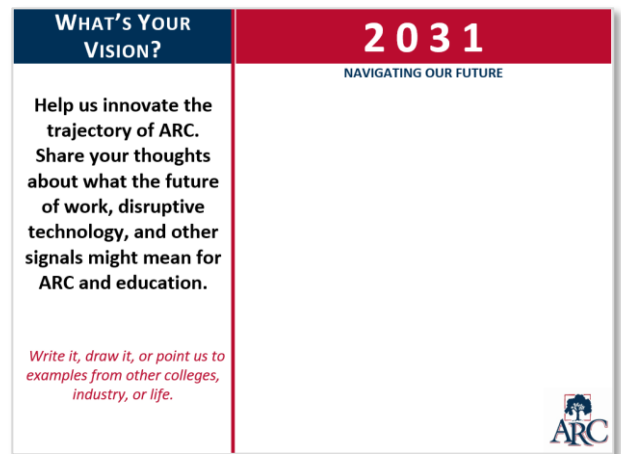




Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

I AM...

HOMELESS AND BARELY SURVIVING

College isn't for people like me. I dropped out of school years ago and I'm too old to go back now. Most days I can find something to eat. I work when I can, but it's hard to get a steady job without an address and phone number. I really wish there was a way out of this mess.

How do you think ARC might respond to this student between now and 2031?

BIG IDEAS WELCOME

I AM...

REALLY WORRIED. MY JOB IS BEING AUTOMATED.

I graduated from ARC in 1995 and got a great job. I've had several promotions and thought I'd never leave my employer. But now they are automating all the jobs in my line of work. No one else is hiring and I think they are automating too. I've got a mortgage to pay and need to figure out what to do.

How do you think ARC might respond to this student between now and 2031?

BIG IDEAS WELCOME



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Photo by Andrew Neel on Unsplash

I AM...

BUSY. LIFE'S TOO HECTIC FOR COLLEGE.

I'm trying to juggle a full-time job, two kids, and take care of my father. My schedule changes every week and I can't just drop everything to go to class. I'd like to get ahead, but I don't have the luxury of taking a couple years off from my other responsibilities to finish my degree.

How do you think ARC might respond to this student between now and 2031?

BIG IDEAS WELCOME

I AM...

A HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR WITH A PART-TIME JOB

I can't wait to be done with school, so I can get on with my life. I don't think I want to go to college ... and can't really afford it anyway. My mom did okay with just high school.

How do you think ARC might respond to this student between now and 2031?

BIG IDEAS WELCOME



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Comments that Set the Stage for Dialogue

Educational master plans among community colleges in California are usually hundreds of pages of detailed information. The document typically includes a labor market scan, population trends, program-specific assessment, FTEF/FTES projections, and other data. Once finished, it just sits on a shelf. That's not what we will be doing. ARC is taking a different approach so that this EMP can serve as a compass for the next 10-15 years. We'll be looking at trends for the future, what's out on the horizon, and what the college should pursue. It will inform our other planning processes.

Help us identify what's out there and suggest possible things that ARC might do given the environment. Let's also consider how automation might affect how ARC operates as an organization. As you watch the video, begin thinking about what the impact of these things is to the classroom and to our institution.

Video Reaction: Initial Response to a Glimpse of the Future of Work



We're going to need a massive spike in educational financing. It's going to take a lot of money to make the changes happen.

In the first video there weren't a lot of middle-class workers, so the question is how do we adapt to it? Or perhaps something needs to be done at the governmental (macro) level. When we think about middle-skill jobs that require some amount of education, there will be an impact. For example, the

carpenters' union is acutely aware that there won't be a need for a ton of cabinetmakers because CNC machines can replicate that work. Instead of 15 people building tons of cabinets, it now takes one who understands the trade and how to operate the machine.

What happens to the people who have jobs that will be replaced in the future? Basic clerical functions, paralegal, and other jobs can be done by technology.



Group Dialogue

The future will require a more educated populace. When we think about ARC and the purpose we serve, we offer both concrete skill development and liberal arts education. ARC needs to strengthen that intersection and focus on multi-cultural aspects. In the future, there's an entanglement with higher level thinking that needs to interconnect with skills training. We don't want to be Blockbuster video or other entities that have become irrelevant.

Thinking about cognition and how we're all designed, we will still need critical thinking skills in the future. The humanities and ethics are really important. Although you can Google a question and immediately find an answer, it can negatively impact individual ability to think and know which question to ask next.

What will expansion of online education mean for students and this institution? Students are voting with their feet, but there's still value in learning from facial expressions and inflections in the moment that aren't captured in an online format. Online learning requires a lot of discipline from each student to manage timelines and tasks. Thinking instructionally, there's the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum. Much of the implicit comes from conversation and networking in the classroom. Those aspects are difficult to emulate in an online environment. The technology doesn't seem to be there yet. We need a place for community building aspects – particularly with ARC's student demographic.

Interacting with public agencies is sometimes like going backwards by comparison to startups and tech companies. There can be a lot of fear of transitioning to technology and fear of change. There are also generational differences in ability to navigate technology. We need to consider who gets left behind in terms of age and economic factors. Technology also impacts mental health, so we should pay attention to both the positive and negative impacts.

Poverty, food insecurity, and issues at home are realities for students. How will the future changes impact students who are already struggling? For students who can't afford a computer or other technologies, how will they access online classes? The big challenge is that there isn't a global answer, but we can figure it out more locally within our own programs and how the institution is structured. Giving more targeted support to students can answer those questions. For example, providing targeted support along the meta-majors [areas of interest] might make sense.

We need STEM-specific targeted support. Intel knows students won't have the skills they need, so the first six months on the job is treated like an internship. They are looking for someone with a broad understanding of STEM topics, but with the potential to develop an industry-specific passion or specialization. There are specialties in each industry that for which ARC trains students. Different employers require different things even though they have a common basic education requirement.

Sometimes it seems like we are trying to make all the pegs fit in the same hole, but everyone learns differently.

Many brand new students don't have sufficient life experience to know what they want to do. Some students have never been outside of local area while others are from international locales without local experience. They all need to build soft skills and gain exposure through experiences.

Will competency-based education and badging capture soft skills? An associate degree conveys that you also had a liberal education. People are looking for the added value of the liberal arts.



In both online and face-to-face classes, students may feel they are just checking the box with no context or practical application. This is a pedagogical aspect. For example, math can be taught with historical and cultural perspective to highlight how it all comes together and help students see how everything is interconnected. We need more training for faculty so that they know how to make more of those connections in the classroom and broaden content beyond the discipline. One suggestion is a cohort-based model in which the curriculum is entirely integrated and rich with projects that relate across disciplines.

Certain state agencies are having difficulty finding people who have the blend of knowledge that they need. The State Board of Equalization is considering creating their own academy for tax valuation/appraisal to develop foundational knowledge of accounting, commercial real estate, evaluation, and other skills. This is a niche that the college could fill. Sacramento is a state worker town. One of the things we may need to consider are the large sources of employment and whether we've been thoughtful about the pipeline. As a college, we know it's there but it would be beneficial to think about how relationships can be nurtured. What's the culture of state employment and what is needed to prepare for state jobs and the testing requirements? What do our key partners need? Who are the big players (state agencies, Amazon, etc.)?

There is a major challenge in getting any type of substantial data about our students. We don't know who is hiring them and where they go after they leave ARC. The pathway philosophy looks toward where the student will eventually land and ARC needs more insight (employment and transfer data).

Advice for the Project Team

Prompt: What advice would you have for the team? Words of wisdom?

- There are a lot of things outside of our control and we need to recognize that a lot of the change is coming externally.
- The big thing is money. We need to be advocating for larger systemic changes related to the funding formula and other resources.
- Community colleges are at the midpoint of education, not a student's start or end. What beneficial reforms could happen at this level and how can we advocate with the Legislature?
- ARC departments and programs are diverse. There are outside governing bodies, varying class sizes, and different operating parameters. If the project team does a good job, the plan will be relevant to the entire college and won't be prescriptive. Each person will be able to apply it to their work, but perhaps in different ways. Maintain the idea of a compass without being too specific.