Summary of Forward Focus Questions

1. **We want to mount an aggressive campaign to encourage technology and life science companies to locate in Irvine.**
   A) What do we need to know before we launch a campaign – data, research, resources, information?
   B) What are the top reasons we can give them to choose Irvine as opposed to another area?
   C) In which geographic area should we look for these companies and why?
      A) Obtain a map of the ecosystem of technology and lifesciences companies
         Find health of ecosystem
         Educational or organizations – skilled talent
         What are key levels
         Identify the ecosystem in other locations and compare to our ecosystem to identify supplier tiers
         Identify technology niches
      B) Find compelling business cases for them to come
         Safest cities
         UCI / Octane

2. **Irvine’s rich diversity is a great asset.**
   A) How can we better expand our outreach into the international business communities in Irvine? Orange County?
   B) What would you recommend we do to better leverage this asset to our advantage?
   C) What could we do to better engage them in our Chamber activities?
      1) Culture variety – Task Force to outreach to influencers in the different communities with the value that participation provides
      2) Business size variety – Chamber can leverage ability to link businesses of different sizes
      3) Industry variety – Chamber can leverage ability to provide local companies with access to international communities and companies here in Irvine instead of going overseas

3. **How can the Chamber help its individual businesses find more customers?**
   A) What kind of new activities or programs should we consider?
   B) What organizations should we collaborate with?
   C) How can we more efficiently contact these businesses?
      1) Create a pool of mentoring resources
      2) Offer matchmaking for Business to Business development
      3) Need other strategies and further discussion
4. **What can the Chamber do to make this organization more effective, useful and relevant to larger companies in Irvine?**  
A) What do you think are the benefits of Chamber engagement to the larger companies?  
B) How can we better propose these Chamber benefits to larger companies?  
C) What existing or new programs might we expand or create that would be of benefit to larger companies?  

1) Connections and intelligence and access to international visiting dignitaries  
2) Shipping documents  
3) Leadership, community support, corporate sponsors  
4) Awards and accolades  
5) Visibility  
*Need to identify companies and find a way to get success stories and case studies in front of them.*

5. **Even though Irvine is well-endowed with impressive educational pipelines, all the research suggests that there still remains a skills gap ahead which could cause challenges for Irvine’s highly skilled, technology, advanced manufacturing, lifesciences and energy sectors. What do you think the biggest challenges are for Irvine companies?**  
A) In addition to the programs currently underway, what else can the Chamber do to help influence the development of our 21st century workforce?  
B) What role can the Chamber play in closing this projected skills gap?  

*Unanswered.*

6. **What do you believe are the biggest potential threat(s) to Irvine’s continued economy vitality?**  
For each potential threat identified, please propose a counter-action that the Chamber might adopt and/or implement which would help neutralize or diminish the effects of the threat.  

Threat 1) Deviating from the original Master Plan  
Threat 2) Additional traffic / congestion issues  
Threat 3) Decreased beautification  

Solutions – Better interaction with the Irvine Company and other builders  
More City Council/Planning Commission interaction  
More potential branding for “family friendly” Irvine through Destination Irvine and only in Irvine.com
7. **Our Business Outreach Rallies are an important pro-active business retention initiative and we are learning that more businesses are concerned about the following issues:**
   - Encroaching residential into industrial zoning areas
   - Parking
   - Traffic congestion
   - High lease prices

Please discuss these issues and recommend specific actions or programs which we may implement to help manage, mitigate or influence these issues for our businesses.

*Unanswered.*

8. **What new, exciting business trends or opportunities do you know about that might help direct Chamber action?**
   A) Of the trends and opportunities identified, which have the most direct impact on Irvine as a place to do business?
   B) Of the trends and opportunities identified, which ones should the Chamber explore further?

   **TRENDS:** R & D innovation of the hub of the U.S.
   - Small start ups being purchased by larger companies, specifically lifesciences
   - Data scientist jobs – turning data into information

   **EXPLORE:** Identify specific data/objectives to help small businesses. Chamber to hire staff members (like Anthony) to help collect data and distribute to Chamber members.

9. **The Orange County/Irvine start-up eco-system is extensive but fragmented and start-ups are a vitality important part of our 21st century economy.**
   A) In addition to the new StartUpOC Now! microsite we are creating, what new activities, programs or actions can we do with our partners (co-work spaces, incubators, accelerators, colleges and universities) to cultivate a more coherent start up ecosystem in Orange County that benefits Irvine?
   B) What can the Chamber do to persuade start ups to stay and grow their businesses in Irvine rather than move elsewhere?

*Unanswered.*
10. Most Irvine businesses agree that being the Safest City in America plays a major role in Irvine’s perception as a great place to do business and a critical component of our national and global brand.
   A) What role do you believe the Chamber has in helping to sustain this brand?
   B) What do you think the Chamber can do better to help sustain this brand?

Chamber Role:
   1) Identify leading indicators – where we are doing well, where we are falling behind, what are past trends
   2) What components make up this measurement – Business focused vs. people focused
   3) Survey companies – what it means to them that Irvine is the safest City:
      How does it affect their employees, the company, productivity; and,
      compare large vs. medium vs. small companies
   4) How does Irvine compare with other cities in the different categories of “being safe.”
   5) Engage with local law enforcement – what data do they have

It is our role as a Chamber to be a steward of this brand. Share data with area Chambers. Market brand to International Chambers.

Development of a Safe City Task Force – The Mission would be stewardship of “Safe City” brand
Objective: What does it mean to companies, employees and families?
Educate neighboring Chambers and other community outreach
Gather, disseminate data, compare with other cities, identify strengths and weaknesses

11. Small businesses and the professional services sector are the most vulnerable to changes in the economic environment.
   A) What actions, programs or activities could the Chamber take that would help small businesses better cope or manage economic volatility?
   B) How can the Chamber more directly influence small business success?

   Provide updates on laws and regulations that affect small business (human resources, legal, proprietary, intellectual, etc.)
   Utilize Task Force structure
   Offer data (in a repository) at the Chamber regarding economy and volatility
   Offer forecast and outlook (re: volatility) and how it affects local economy
   Fund student groups (e.g. Chapman) to do economic analysis and/or trend analysis on a quarterly basis
   Forum of peer to peer learning
   Provide educational resources and experts on cash management, cash flow forecasting, working capital
   Provide business guidance and critiques to small businesses through business people, SBA, SBDC, SCORE
12. What issues, trends or challenges do you see for Irvine businesses or Irvine as a place to do business that the Chamber can better address or leverage?

A) How would you propose we become engaged with this issue?
B) What are the upsides and downsides to becoming engaged with this issue?

Issues: Cost of living, Cost of business, traffic

No other comments.