

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Continued Exploration of New Focus Areas

Boosting Higher Education Enrollment and Success

Purpose: Informational. (This information may be the basis for later action.)

Updates are being provided each month on special initiatives listed in the [Focus Areas for 2020-21](#) document that was part of the July 2020 board package. The November committee meeting is dedicated to the focus area entitled, “Boosting Higher Education Enrollment and Success.”

Strategic Plan References: The “Boosting Higher Education Enrollment and Success” focus area corresponds primarily to the existing strategic plan goal of “Student Interest and Access.” Some action steps under it also correspond to “Clear and Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success.”

Maintain Funding for Realized Enrollment Growth

- In 2020, the General Assembly appropriated \$41.5M (SFY 2020-21) of non-recurring COVID-19 funds for enrollment growth.
- The enrollment growth, which became evident in data released in fall 2019, represented the first significant enrollment growth in almost a decade, especially in short-term workforce training programs.
- Due to COVID-19 impacts, enrollment at many community colleges during the summer and fall 2020 does not seem to be as strong, which is concerning both for students and the System’s financial capacity.
 - This is a time in our economy when the community colleges need to reach, advise, and educate/train more students, not fewer.
 - Because the Community College System is funded in arrears, faltering enrollment impacts the financial capacity of the System when the System should be ramping up its programming and advising as a key tool in the State’s economic recovery efforts.
- The Community College System aims to maintain enrollment growth funding for State Fiscal Year 2021-22 to ensure that it is able to meet the expected increased demand of students in the 2021-22 academic year as vaccine(s) are projected to roll out and the threat of COVID-19 is projected to subside.

Shifting of Marketing Campaign and Communications

- In 2019, the System launched its first systemwide marketing campaign, supported through \$2.35 million in private funds. The campaign was envisioned as an effort to create awareness and project a new image of community colleges as fresh, modern

and relevant.

- The campaign has had three phases, with a large kickoff in the summer of 2019, a COVID-focused mini campaign in April of 2020 and a summer 2020 campaign that targeted three age groups for fall enrollment.
- The tone of the messages shifted to meet the economic uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. In early November, a new phase launched with \$1 million in COVID relief funds, with ads aimed at those who need affordable college options, upskilling opportunities and new pathways to employment. And for the first time, the campaign targeted parents with messages about Career & College Promise and students with information about financial aid.

Establish a System Initiative on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- In July, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative was announced, to be led by Don Tomas, president of Southwestern Community College, and Thomas Walker, president of Wayne Community College.
- Presidents Walker and Tomas requested the participation of five additional presidents to support this initiative. The presidents participating in this work include: Janet Spriggs, Forsyth Community College; David Johnson, Johnston Community College; Pamela Senegal, Piedmont Community College; Maria Pharr, South Piedmont Community College; and Mark Kinlaw, Rockingham Community College.
- The initiative will examine system-level and various college policies to identify any institutional inequities that could limit opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.
- The committee is currently in the process of selecting a vendor to facilitate the review of policies and create a guide for colleges to use when examining their own policies and procedures
- The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will make recommendations for changes by mid-2021.