# Putting Education to Work

## NC Community Colleges 2018-2022 Strategic Plan

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# NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## CREATING SUCCESS

**Ensure the educational pipeline prepares a workforce possessing the interest, knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the needs of employers, now and into the future.**

### 3.1. Collaborate with stakeholders to promote a workforce system that fosters innovation and establishes seamless connections among community colleges, K-12 education, universities, workforce and economic development partners, and business and industry.

3.1.1.  Identify and engage employers and relevant sources of data to determine high-demand occupations, program demand within the current labor market, and expected occupational earnings.

3.1.2.  Partner with high schools, universities, and workforce development entities to engage at the regional/local levels with employers and industry associations to identify workforce needs and establish educational and training programs collaboratively and comprehensively to create a workforce ready pipeline.

3.1.3.  Collaborate with workforce partners to benchmark successful state and national workforce systems.

### 3.2. Offer relevant, high-quality instructional programs that meet the needs of business and industry for existing and future jobs.

3.2.1. Provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality professional development to faculty and staff to stay informed about labor market and student support trends.

3.2.2. Articulate pathways for educational and professional growth within key industries through employer engagement.

3.2.3. Develop faculty capacity to conduct program review and learning outcomes assessment to promote continuous improvement of programs.

3.2.4. Integrate critical employability skills into all programs of study to better prepare students for today's work environment.

3.2.5. Modify the instructional funding model to ensure colleges have necessary resources to offer workforce training needed by their communities.

### 3.3. Increase student access to work experience.

3.3.1. Leverage partnerships to connect students with expanded work-based learning opportunities.

3.3.2. Modify policies and eliminate the barriers that impede access to apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities.

# Highlighted Activities



**W**ork-Based Learning – Provides students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop their employability. To develop a continuum of high-quality work-based learning for NC students and adult learners, the System is leveraging the transfer of ApprenticeshipNC and the state's participation on National Governor's Association Policy Academy for Work-Based Learning. North Carolina's capacity to service business and industry with the complete toolbox of work-based learning options will be expanded by utilizing the 58 community colleges in the state.

**I**ndustry Association Engagement – In 2017, the System formed a group of statewide industry associations, the Council of Associations for Engagement, and asked a simple question: "What keeps your business members up at night?" The issues were many but focused on specific workforce issues such as turnover associated with the graying of the workforce, need for employability skills, perceptions of their industries, and the need for flexible short-term training. Going forward, the System is looking to expand its partnerships with statewide industry associations to address skill gaps, improve the alignment of curriculum to industry needs, and develop other solutions driven by business needs.

**I**ndustry Recognized Credentials – The NC Community College System is supporting students' attainment of industry-recognized credentials to improve their employability and career advancement. One key way is by seeking changes to the state funding formula for education and training to fully recognize the value of short-term training that leads to in-demand industry credentials. Another is by working with researchers and credentialing organizations to validate the significance of credentials in the workplace and improve the ability to capture data on community college students earning third-party credentials.

# System Effectiveness

**Advance organizational effectiveness, operations, and decision-making to support a cohesive system of nimble, empowered, and community-driven colleges.**

## 4.1. Ensure colleges and the System have access to technology and related infrastructure to meet student and institutional needs.

4.1.1.  Implement a sustainable, system-wide enterprise resources planning (ERP) solution that enables more consistent and efficient operations.

4.1.2.  Sustain the current ERP infrastructure to prepare for transition to a moderized ERP.

## 4.2. Improve decision-making through increased access to comprehensive, timely, and quality data.

4.2.1. Ensure that core data needs are identified, defined, governed, and accurately reported.

4.2.2. Provide access to analytical and business intelligence tools needed to support timely reporting on student and institutional outcomes.

## 4.3. Enhance and support workplace environments that value and engage employees and provide opportunities for growth and development.

4.3.1. Assess and address the professional development needs across the System.

4.3.2. Advocate for competitive salaries and benefits for community college faculty and employees.

## 4.4. Ensure policies, procedures, and processes facilitate System effectiveness and compliance.

4.4.1. Routinely monitor and revise the State Board of Community Colleges Code to ensure policies are current and clear.

4.4.2. Facilitate collaboration between System Office and the NC Association of Community College Presidents on the establishment of standard policies and procedures required to meet System requirements and align with best practices.

# System Effectiveness

## 4.5. Leverage partnerships and agreements to create efficiencies for the System as a whole.

4.5.1. Advocate for regional or system-wide procurement mechanisms to simplify processes.

4.5.2. Foster regional and system-wide collaborations.

## 4.6. Improve cohesiveness between colleges, professional associations, System Office, and partners.

4.6.1. Improve communication among all System entities and key partners.

4.6.2. Leverage community college professional associations to increase communication and problem-solving across our System.

# Highlighted Activities

**New Enterprise Resource Planning System** – After using the current ERP system for over a 15 years, the System is planning for a modern technology platform to support the 58 community colleges and System Office. With input from thousands of individuals across the state with a stake in the future of community colleges, the ERP planning process involves rethinking the way North Carolina community colleges operate and provide instruction. Setting the stage for a modern ERP will enable the System to accelerate its education innovation efforts and support more efficient operations.

**Access to Quality Data and Analytics** – To support student success, encourage data-driven decision-making, and achieve operational efficiencies, the System is committed to increasing access to quality data and analytics. Two priorities for the System are improved data governance processes and designing the new ERP system with information needs clearly delineated.

**The Student Success Center** – Provides research-based support for the 58 community colleges to advance, scale, and sustain student success and completion efforts. Based on the NC Guided Pathways to Success Plan developed with college and partner support, the Student Success Center will provide comprehensive and customized resources to colleges to advance their student success efforts, including professional and organizational development, coaching, and technical assistance.

# Acknowledgements

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