North Carolina Community Colleges
Putting Education to Work
2018-2022 Strategic Plan - update approved 2/2021

nccommunitycolleges.edu/strategic-plan

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
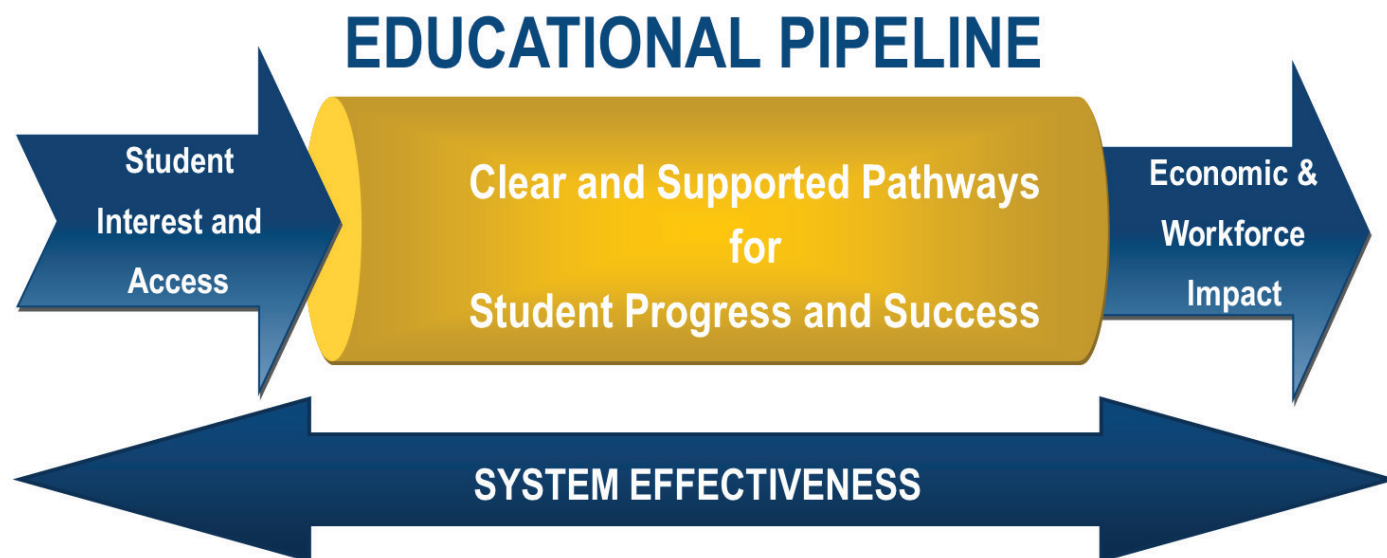## CREATING SUCCESS

Mission

To open the door to high quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to postsecondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing:

• Education, training and retraining for the workforce including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs.

• Support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry and in collaboration with the University of North Carolina System and private colleges and universities.

• Services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life.

"The only valid philosophy for North Carolina is the philosophy of total education; a belief in the incomparable worth of all human beings, whose claims upon the state are equal before the law and equal before the bar of public opinion; whose talents (however great or however limited or however different from the traditional) the state needs and must develop to the fullest possible degree. That is why the doors to the institutions of North Carolina's system of community colleges must never be closed to anyone of suitable age who can learn what they teach. We must take people where they are and carry them as far as they can go within the assigned functions of the system."

Dr. W. Dallas Herring
Chairman, State Board of Education, 1957-77
"Father of the Community College System"

EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE

Student Interest and Access → **Clear and Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success** → Economic & Workforce Impact

SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

As the State Board of Community Colleges embarked on its initial planning process in early 2017, it was becoming clear how wide the gap was between postsecondary educational attainment and the needs of the economy. Data from 2015 showed only an estimated 48% of North Carolina's prime working-age adults had a postsecondary degree or other credential of workplace value. Meanwhile, 67% of jobs in North Carolina were projected to require postsecondary education or training by 2020.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the Community College System focused on four themes related to comprehensively improving the educational pipeline provided by community colleges:

- **Student Interest and Access:** How do we overcome lack of interest and barriers to higher education access to increase the percentage of North Carolinians pursuing postsecondary education?

- **Clear and Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success:** How do we better provide students the instruction and support needed to successfully attain a degree/credential and enter the workforce or transfer to a four-year institution in a timely manner?

- **Economic and Workforce Impact:** How do we ensure that our students have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the state's economic and workforce needs?

- **System Effectiveness:** How do we support a cohesive system of nimble, community-driven colleges and empowered faculty and staff? How do we improve institutional capacity to support the System's mission and reduce operational risk?

Environmental Scan

- Research of demographic and economic trends affecting community colleges.

- Review of 58 community colleges' strategic plans to understand what is important to our System.

- Initial stakeholder engagement, including students, businesses, legislative leaders, and community college presidents and professional associations.

Plan Development

- Teams co-chaired by System Office and community college leaders focused on four themes: Student Interest & Access; Clear & Supported Pathways for Student Progress & Success; Economic & Workforce Impact; System Effectiveness.

- Included participation of partners and customers.

- Reviewed and revised by the State Board of Community Colleges.

Plan Implementation and Adjustments

- Approval by the State Board of Community Colleges, February 2018

- The State Board monitors and evaluates progress toward achievement of the plan's goals, making adjustments as needed.

  This edition of the plan reflects revisions adopted by the State Board in February 2021.

Plan Uses

- Promote a clear and consistent message about North Carolina's community colleges.
- Guide development of NC Community College System's budget and legislative priorities.
- Promote accountability.
- Aid in making decisions and focusing on priorities.
- Inspire our community college "family" and promote cohesion.

GOAL 1: Increase the percentage of North Carolinians, particularly within underserved populations, pursuing and easily accessing education or training through North Carolina community colleges.

1.1. Improve the understanding and perceived value of educational opportunities, including lifelong learning, offered by North Carolina community colleges.

  1.1.1. Implement a comprehensive, system-wide marketing and communications plan that focuses on the value of community colleges and promotes the image of the System and our institutions.

  1.1.2. Strengthen collaboration with education, community, business, and workforce partners for outreach and to support students as they transition through a seamless system of education in North Carolina.

  1.1.3. Reconnect former community college students to education and training opportunities that foster continued educational and career growth.

1.2. Increase student interest and success in industries experiencing skills gaps.

  1.2.1. Market the value of technical education and workforce training for jobs/careers.

1.3. Identify and reduce access barriers for all prospective students, particularly among underserved populations.

  1.3.1. Improve and augment existing financial assistance programs and services to better assist students with educational costs, particularly costs beyond tuition and fees (e.g., books, transportation, child care, etc.).

  1.3.2. Promote more flexible scheduling and instructional delivery formats, including more robust and inclusive online learning.*

1.4. Improve the student experience and increase enrollment by simplifying enrollment policies, processes, and communications.

  1.4.1. Re-envision the application and enrollment process for community colleges.

  1.4.2. Improve initial advising to include career exploration and improve navigation of the enrollment process.

Clear and Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success

GOAL 2: Provide a continuum of education, training, advising, and support to help learners make informed decisions that lead to credentials and careers.

2.1. Provide timely and accurate career exploration and academic planning opportunities.

2.1.1. Integrate career exploration and employer outreach for all audiences from the moment they engage.

2.1.2. Develop and support effective career planning practices for faculty and staff.

2.2. Provide integrated, targeted support services that promote student success.

2.2.1. Provide support for student academic concerns, including early alerts to increase retention.

2.2.2. Connect students to transportation, health, and other comprehensive services, drawing on both college and community resources to address non-academic barriers faced by students.

2.3. Increase completion of credentials for successful transition to careers and/or further education.

2.3.1. Simplify and streamline processes from entry through completion/transfer, effectively incorporating multiple on and off ramps.

2.3.2. Refine foundational and developmental education strategies to accelerate student readiness for college-level instruction.

2.3.3. Validate students' prior learning and experience to minimize student costs and the time it takes to complete their educational goals.

2.3.4. Support effective advising and coaching to help students determine, pursue, and achieve their educational and career goals.

2.3.5. Promote guided educational pathways within broader career pathways.

2.4. Reduce opportunity gaps* for underserved students.

2.4.1. Help college employees understand and employ effective teaching/coaching strategies for all students, including those who are dealing with the impacts of poverty, trauma, addiction, mental illness, disabilities, and other challenges.

2.4.2. Identify and remove systemic challenges to students of color and offer them targeted supports.*

Economic and Workforce Impact

GOAL 3: 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 and engage with employers and industry associations at the regional/local levels to identify workforce needs and establish educational and training programs collaboratively and comprehensively.
>
> 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-based learning.

> 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.

3.4   Increase business counseling for small business owners.*

> 3.4.1. Adjust the Small Business Center performance funding model to prioritize business counseling activities.*

3.5   Develop a workforce pipeline for emergency response, pandemic-proof, and high-demand industries.*

> 3.5.1. Implement the NC Workforce Credentials framework.*
>
> 3.5.2. Expand the teacher preparation pipeline through articulation agreements with universities for teacher prep and lateral entry/residency pathways.*
>
> 3.5.3. Provide enhanced training for law enforcement officers to ensure safe and fair enforcement of laws.*

SBCC
08/20/2021

GOAL 4: 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 modernized ERP.

4.1.3. Expand broadband access at North Carolina community colleges.*

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.

4.4.3. Identify and apply lessons learned from the pandemic based on best practices, System needs, and gaps in strategies.*

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 among colleges.

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.
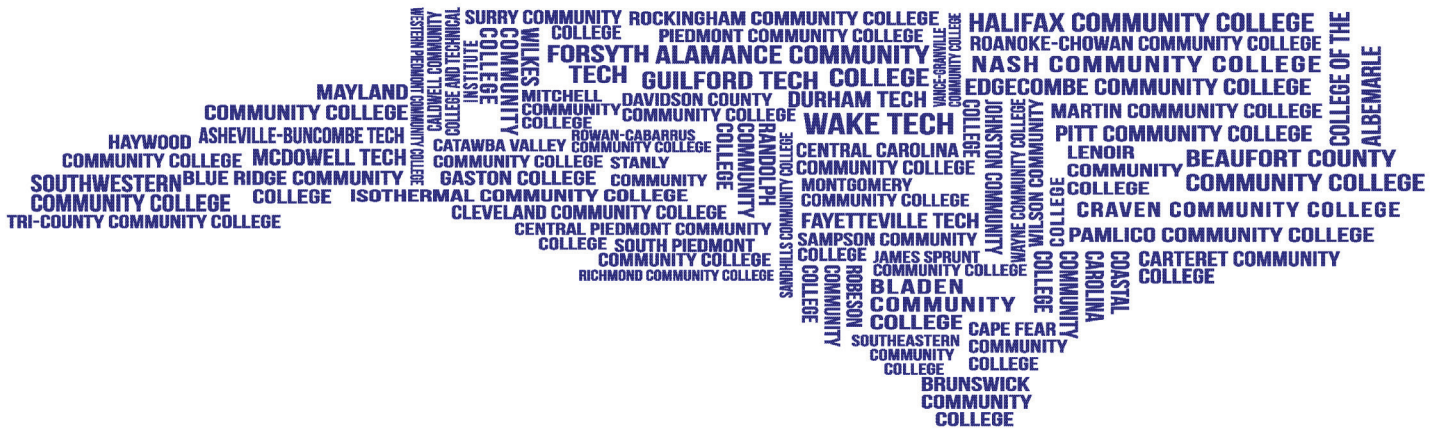
Plan Revisions Adopted 2/2021

State Board of Community Colleges
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Strategic Planning Committee
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North Carolina Community College System
President Thomas A. Stith III

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER