



**TRAILBLAZING
FUTURES:
THE 2013-2018
RED ROCKS
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN**

May 5, 2014



trail•blaz•ing (trā'l'blā'zĭng) adj.

Suggestive of one that blazes a trail; setting out in a promising new direction; pioneering or innovative: trailblazing research; a trailblazing new technique.

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In many times and places, human beings have marked new pathways by indicating a direction on a tree or another natural object. These markings, known in English as blazes, were sometimes based on paths opened by animals or other people who had gone before. Sometimes these blazed trails grew into roads or even superhighways. But all marked directions for a person or a group that would become a coherent pathway to their destinations, and sometimes even their dreams. It is our hope that this strategic plan will provide such directions for the trailblazers of Red Rocks Community College, our students, faculty, and staff. It is to them this plan is dedicated.

RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE 2013-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>Page 5</i>
<i>Part One – Why We Are Planning</i>	<i>Page 6</i>
<i>Part Two – How This Plan Was Developed</i>	<i>Page 10</i>
<i>Part Three – Mission, Vision, and Values</i>	<i>Page 12</i>
<i>Part Four – Strategic Goals and Directions</i>	<i>Page 15</i>
<i>Strategic Goal One – Student Success</i>	<i>Page 15</i>
<i>Strategic Goal Two – Community Engagement</i>	<i>Page 17</i>
<i>Strategic Goal Three – Institutional Renewal</i>	<i>Page 18</i>
<i>Strategic Goal Four – A Culture of Inquiry and Evidence</i>	<i>Page 20</i>
<i>Part Five – Performance Measurement and Alignment</i>	<i>Page 22</i>
<i>Part Six – Summary</i>	<i>Page 23</i>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic Goal and Direction

Indicator(s)

Goal 1 – Student Success

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Increase remedial completion | Course & sequence completion |
| 2. Improve retention and completion rates | Retention, completion & transfer |
| 3. Develop innovative academic programming | Development of programs & curricula |
| 4. Develop ongoing program review for all programs | Fully implemented review procedures |
| 5. Expand innovative use of instructional technology | Tech plan + professional development |
| 6. Upgrade facilities to resolve space issues | Completed plans & upgrades |
| 7. Improve advising and “smart scheduling” | Reduced student time to completion |

Goal 2- Community Engagement

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Increase access for underserved students | Underserved student enrollment |
| 2. Increase attainment for underserved students | Retention, completion & transfer |
| 3. Lower student debt load & default rates | Debt load, default, and scholarships |
| 4. Build programs & services that benefit community | Workforce & community partnerships |
| 5. Build enrollment through community partnerships | Concurrent enrollment & retention |
| 6. Build International education and global programs | Programs & curricular articulation |
| 7. Higher education marketing in West Metro | Marketing plan & community data |

Goal 3 – Institutional Renewal

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Digitize and share student information for advising | Data tools and student planning |
| 2. Develop technological & facilities infrastructure | Services, repositories, and usage |
| 3. New methods and platforms for instruction | Documented changes and outcomes |
| 4. Increase diversity through hiring | Diversity plan and climate survey |
| 5. Develop health and wellness services & training | Develop and assess programs & services |
| 6. Expand professional development opportunities | Climate & effectiveness assessment |
| 7. Implement Process Improvement Team findings | Enrollment growth & completion time |

Goal 4 – Culture of Inquiry & Evidence

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Develop Common Student Learning Outcomes | Integration and assessment results |
| 2. Develop co-curricular learning goals | Integration and assessment results |
| 3. Establish clear pathways to completion | Student progression & completion data |
| 4. New instructional delivery centers and options | Completion and enrollment growth |
| 5. Complete an Academic Master Plan | Complete & implement plan |
| 6. Develop career planning & experiential education | Number of career learning opportunities |
| 7. Develop systemic data collection and dissemination | AQIP reaffirmation of accreditation |



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Document prepared by Tim Griffin, *Executive Director Planning, Research and Effectiveness*

Many individuals contributed information, time and their insights in the development of the Red Rocks Community College Strategic Plan for 2013-18. The author extends special thanks to:

Michele Haney, *President*

Lisa Fowler, *Vice President of Student Success*

Colleen Jorgensen, *Vice President of Workforce and Community Development*

Peggy Morgan, *Vice President of Administrative Services*

Bob Rizzuto, *Interim Vice President for Instructional Services*

Bill Dial, *Executive Director of Human Resources*

Ron Slinger, *Executive Director of the RRCC Foundation and Development*

Kim Rein, *Director of Marketing and Communication*

Charles Duell, *Director of Institutional Research*

The students, faculty, and staff members of the RRCC Collaboration Council

Amy Braziller, *Faculty Senate President*

Candace Garrod, *State Faculty Advisory Council*

Deborah Houser, *AdminProTech Council Vice Chair*

Karla LeComte, *Classified Forum Vice President*

Ed Miller, *Student Government President*

Yvonne Pepping, *Classified Forum President*

Kathy Schissler, *Executive Assistant to the President*

Janet Steinkamp, *Associate Vice President for the Arvada Campus*

Rebecca Winters, *Phi Theta Kappa Vice President*

The 2013 AQIP Strategy Forum Team

Wendy Bird, *Business and Real Estate Faculty*

Amy Braziller, *English Faculty*

Kathy Kaoudis, *Comptroller*

Bill McGreevy, *Dean*

Delia Ochoa, *Engineering Graphics Faculty*

Aimee Marcelo, *Web & Internet Marketing Manager*

Berndt Savig, *Art Faculty*

And to all the many other faculty, staff and students who contributed valuable input and assistance in the process.



WHY WE ARE PLANNING

Recently, the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges issued a report on “Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and America’s Future.” In this report, the Commission notes that community colleges throughout the United States must help the communities they serve to face many challenges.

In short, the American Dream has stalled. Median income in the United States stagnated between 1972 and 2000. Since 2000, median family income has declined by 7%. A child born poor in the United States today is more likely to remain poor than at any time in our history. Nearly half of all Americans – a record number – either have fallen into poverty or have earnings that classify them as low-income.

Perhaps of greatest concern to us as educators is that the United States for the first time is seeing that younger generations will be less educated than their elders. The United States, which for generations led the world in college degree completion, now ranks 16th in the world in completion rates for 25- to 34-year-olds. By 2018, nearly two thirds of all American jobs will require a post-secondary certificate or degree. If this nation can add 20 million post-secondary, educated workers to its workforce over the next 15 years, income inequality will decline substantially, reversing the decline of the middle class.

However, to build a skilled workforce, we must begin with the reality of who our students are and what they need. In the United States we are seeing these demographic trends for community college students.

- First generation to attend college – 42%
- Single parents – 13%
- Non-U.S. citizens – 16%
- Veterans – 3%
- Students with disabilities – 12%

Red Rocks Community College reflects these national trends.

- First generation students - 49%
- Single Parents – 10%
- Low income students grew from 1,923 (21%) to 3,120 (33%) between 2009 and 2011.
- Percentage of adults 25 years and older with no post-secondary credential
 - Nationally: 59%
 - Arvada: 59%
 - Edgewater: 74%
 - Golden: 42%
 - Lakewood: 58%
 - Wheat Ridge: 65%
 - West I-70 Corridor/South Jefferson County: 32%

As the 2013 Colorado Community College System environmental scan observes, postsecondary education in the United States and Colorado is under significant stress. There are many factors challenging higher education.

- Policy makers have significantly cut higher education funding and the backlash against tuition increases, which served to offset these cuts, is growing.
- Economic and demographic pressures will constrain and shape tuition and enrollment growth in the future amplifying the need to provide high quality education at an affordable cost.
- Uncertain job prospects and high student debt burdens have increasingly brought the value of a college degree into question, particularly in regard to helping students get a high paying job at an affordable cost.
- Questions about the affordability and value of higher education, along with concerns that Pell grants and other financial aid programs are increasingly unsustainable, are increasing pressure to alleviate tuition increases and a demand for increased accountability for outcomes.
- Finally, given the proliferation of on-line alternatives to traditional higher education, there is heightened competition.

At the same time, these challenges have not diminished the importance of higher education for Colorado's future. Both the Colorado Community College System and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education note four important higher education challenges for Colorado – all of which must be addressed through increased student success:

- Workforce needs – We won't have enough educated Coloradans to full our state's jobs by 2020;
- Education pipeline – Fewer than 25% of Colorado 9th graders earn a college degree;
- Completion gaps – The fastest growing segments of our population are least likely to earn a degree;
- Shifting financial burden – The share of college costs paid by students has doubled in 10 years.

To address these challenges and needs, Red Rocks Community College has developed a five-year plan, culminating with the re-affirmation of our AQIP accreditation in the 2018-2019 Academic Year. The plan has been developed through numerous conversations with students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders. In addition to the advancement of higher education both locally and globally, we have developed this plan for several reasons.

1. *We plan first and foremost because we care about each person whom we serve.* As a learning-centered institution, we know that what we do matters. Real people succeed or fail based on the extent to which we carry out our mission. Strategic planning provides a framework to place the needs of each person served at the heart of our work. To develop this plan, we have engaged in a series of conversations with internal constituencies and external stakeholders. We want you to know we hear you and will follow through.

2. *We plan because historically we are a resource-challenged institution (ironically, in large part due to our remarkable success in extending opportunity throughout our service*

Between 2000 and 2010, the RRCC service area population grew by 1% while enrollment grew 42%. During the decade, RRCC maintained a Faculty to Student ratio between 23 and 21 to 1.

area). We have always aimed to do more and have had less with which to work than has been the case at many institutions with similar missions. Strategic planning helps us to set priorities, and to place our time, talent, and financial resources where they can bring about the most significant results.

3. *We plan because we are committed to stewardship of the resources entrusted to us by students, government, and donors. We aim to be accountable for every dollar entrusted to us, and to link those dollars to achieving our mission through*

the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan gives direction to annual goal setting and budgeting at the College.

4. *We plan because we are part of a region that plans across boundaries and jurisdictions, and because we are part of a state system that plans for its future. We want to be good citizens, linking our efforts to work that goes beyond our institutional boundaries to improve our region and our state. This Strategic Plan addresses both assessment of institutional effectiveness and accountability.*

The Red Rocks Community College service area has changed significantly since the last Strategic Plan. The “graying” of the RRCC service area is one major trend that occurred between 2000 and 2010. Growth of the Hispanic population in the service area is another. Over the past decade, the Hispanic population of Jefferson County increased by 45.8%. Park and Gilpin Counties also had notable increases.

In Jefferson County, the Hispanic population increase of 23,996 people offset a decrease of 20,256 in the White not Hispanic population. Both the decline in the White, not Hispanic population and the increase in the Hispanic population were fueled by younger age groups. In Jefferson County from 2000 to 2010 the Hispanic population 17 years and younger increased from 18,419 to 26,353, an increase of 7,934 or 43.1%. In contrast, the White, Not Hispanic population 17 years and younger decreased from 106,217 to 83,380, a decrease of 22,837 or 21.5%.

RRCC increased under-represented student enrollment by 61% between 2006 and 2011 compared to a 14% increase in the service area from 2000 to 2010.

In short, the demographic changes over the past decade present a picture of two service areas: an aging, affluent White, non-Hispanic population living in unincorporated suburbs, and another that is less affluent, more diverse, and concentrated in the major municipalities closer

to the core metropolitan area. RRCC has the opportunity to bridge these two service areas. We must be prepared to understand and serve an increasingly diverse student body. We also need to anticipate emerging technologies, changes in the general knowledge and skills required of all students, and new occupational performance expectations.

Economic change, coupled with demographic changes in markets, also has a major impact on the future of Red Rocks Community College. Business, industry, government, and civic stakeholders surveyed by RRCC in a 2013 environmental scan indicated several service area needs:

- Program growth for continuing and technical education (CTE);
- Employment readiness of graduates (noted also by students);
- Access to postsecondary programs;
- Programming alignments with industry;
- Quality and excellence of programs;
- Health professions programs (noted by both employers and four-year institutional partners);
- Partnerships and community engagement.

Occupational and industry growth patterns in our service area indicate the importance of preparing students for service occupations that require strong technical and general educational abilities, such as healthcare support and protective services. We also need to prepare our students for professional careers as healthcare practitioners, business, hospitality and finance managers, engineers, and education and social service providers. Many of these students will go on to complete baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees. RRCC needs to prepare both types of students to compete in a 21st century labor market and lay the foundation for life-long learning. We must continue to do this through articulation with other colleges and universities, and through continuing education and training that advances the careers of our students and the success of their employers.

This strategic plan not only aligns with the Colorado Community College System Strategic Plan, with the Colorado Department of Higher Education Performance Contract, but also with our nine AQIP accreditation categories. AQIP reviewers identified several opportunities for improvement in the last AQIP Systems Portfolio Review performed in 2012. These include:

- The development of Common Student learning Outcomes;
- Institutional Co-curricular goals;
- Expansion of academic and non-academic program review and assessment;
- In general, the development of systematic and comprehensive processes that identify, select, manage, and distribute information related to planning and improvement.

RRCC has achieved notice as having the highest graduate earnings (\$46,786) in Colorado, exceeded only by the Colorado School of Mines and Regis University.

The following Strategic Plan addresses all these AQIP opportunities in addition to the imperatives of student learning needs and economic and demographic change in our communities. Guidance for all these efforts, and the Strategic Plan itself, begins with the RRCC Mission, Vision, and Values.



HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

During the 2012-2013 academic year, Red Rocks Community College began a review of its Values, Mission, and Vision throughout the college. The college completed the new Values statement in the same academic year while Mission and Vision review continued into the next year. In September 2013, the Red Rocks Community College Collaboration Council decided to embark on a strategic planning process. The Collaboration Council, which serves to review and align planning and accreditation, approved the following guiding principles.

- **Shared Governance** – The planning process should encourage the active participation of faculty, staff, students, alumni, community leaders, and other constituent groups.
- **Communication and Transparency** – Planning deliberations will be communicated regularly with the campus community, and the planning process will involve cross-divisional collaboration to ensure the integration of strategies across functional lines for optimization of results.
- **Data-informed** – The plan should be based on systematically gathered and analyzed information.
- **Relevance** – The plan should reflect the College’s distinctive role in the west Denver metropolitan area, the region, the state, and beyond.
- **Alignment with State Goals and Internal RRCC planning** – The plan should align with and support the goals of the Colorado Community College System, the statewide accountability system, and RRCC facilities, academic master, and enrollment management plans.

Students who transfer into RRCC grew from 816 to 1,111 over the past three Fall semesters, an increase of 36%. In Fall 2013, students who transferred into RRCC were 13% of total enrollment.

- **Ambitious but Realistic** – The plan should establish ambitious goals yet be mindful of the realities of the college’s current environment and those expected to become realities during the planning horizon.
- **Actionable** – The plan should provide the strategic foundation upon which the annual RRCC goals can be developed and approved by CCCS.
- **Resource Allocation and Alignment** – The final plan should serve as a guide for aligning the college’s human, physical, technological, and financial resources with the college’s strategic priorities.
- **Accountability** – The plan should incorporate performance metrics that are measurable and that demonstrate the college’s progress toward achievement of the CDHE performance contract with CCCS. Further, the college will monitor its progress and let that inform future actions as we seek continuous improvement.

RRCC served an unduplicated total of 14,351 students during the 2012-13 academic year. This includes 1,209 concurrent high school students, who were about 8% of all students served.

The Collaboration Council followed these guiding principles throughout the process of development, and aligned the plan with external governance and accreditation plans and requirements. The Council recommended final versions of the mission and vision of the College, and developed a draft of the strategic plan for review by the College community and external stakeholders.

Data, information, and recommendations were collected through conversations between the President of the College with internal constituencies and external stakeholders. As successive drafts of the plan emerged from these conversations, the plan was reviewed by college faculty and staff as a whole. It also underwent review in focused meetings with college constituencies, college divisions, and special task forces, such as the cross-functional Enrollment Management team. College advisory boards and other external stakeholders from RRCC service area communities reviewed the draft plan as well.

A final strategic plan was developed based upon the on suggestions and feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The final plan that emerged represents the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administration, and external stakeholders. It conveys the shared values, mission, vision, and goals of the entire college community in service to our students and communities. It is the unifying instrument that provides an integrated foundation for future efforts toward the achievement of the college mission through strategic resource allocation, action, and assessment.



MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is a mission-driven, two-year public community college. The College service area includes the western Denver metropolitan area centered in Jefferson County, and the adjacent mountain counties of Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Park. Our programs also draw students from the entire metropolitan area, the State of Colorado, and the world. Our service to local Colorado communities and our global reach is in concert with vision and mission of the Colorado Strategic Plan for Higher Education.

We envision a Colorado with a globally competitive system of higher education that builds our economy and enhances our quality of life for our citizens by:

- *Meeting the current and future needs of our workforce and our business community;*
- *Providing access to every qualified student through a tiered system of institutions;*
- *Maximizing quality, efficiencies, collaborations and affordability;*
- *Offering seamless transitions to appropriate levels of learning for all students; and*
- *Developing responsible citizens for a successful civic enterprise.*

As one of thirteen community colleges governed by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) our college also brings the vision and mission established in the CCCS Strategic Plan to the local community through our programs and services.

Colorado Community College System Vision

Colorado community colleges are unsurpassed at providing quality educational opportunities for all who aspire to enrich their lives.

Colorado Community College System Mission

To provide an accessible, responsive learning environment that facilitates the achievement of educational, professional and personal goals by our students and other members of our communities in an atmosphere that embraces academic excellence, diversity and innovation.

The Red Rocks Community College mission and vision echo statewide and system plans. While we aspire to national and even international leadership, we first and foremost seek to be a leader in our local communities and in the region. We aspire to be a bridge to education and achievement that provides our communities and students with a gateway for life-long learning and career development, giving them access to the world and to a bright future. The ability of our region and our state to compete in a global, knowledge economy depends upon our students' success in an economy that requires increasingly higher levels of knowledge and skills. Developing tomorrow's required knowledge and skills in national and global context, while grounded in a specific locality, gives us our identity and provides the cornerstone for our Vision, Mission, and Values.

Vision

We envision Red Rocks as a national and international leader in community college education recognized for accomplishment of our students' goals, engagement with our community, empowerment in our workplace, and commitment to our values.

Mission

Our mission is to provide students with opportunities for growth and development that set the foundation for self-directed learning, academic achievement, and career accomplishment. We do this through high quality, innovative educational programs that convey our passion for learning, our commitment to excellence, and our dedication to our students and the communities we serve.

Values

Red Rocks Community College values Integrity. This value is expressed when we:

- Are in compliance with legal and professional standards;
- Exhibit honesty, fairness, and ethical behavior;
- Take responsibility for our work and are accountable to our internal and external stakeholders;
- Are transparent in our goals and methods;
- Care about the quality of our work and actively pursue innovation and efficiency in what we do.

Red Rocks Community College values Collaboration. This value is expressed when we:

- Strive to create a supportive environment for our students and for each other;
- Work together outside of our immediate unit or division to improve student academic success and development;
- Demonstrate that we value people, especially students and our co-workers, in our working relationships;
- Engage in teamwork that is based on trust, empowerment, and respect.

The graduation rate for first-time, full-time students at RRCC increased by 54% over the past three years from 1,286 graduates in 2010-11 to 1,982 in 2012-13.

Red Rocks Community College values Learning. This value is expressed when we:

- Demonstrate a passion for life-long learning and develop this in our students and community;
- Create learning opportunities for our current and future students through community involvement and connection with external stakeholders;
 - Dedicate ourselves to scholarship and professionalism that creates innovative and creative learning environments for students, the community, and ourselves;
 - Develop and deliver engaging learning opportunities that promote student growth as a whole person: intellectually, through their career, and through the development of personal abilities such as adaptability and initiative.

Between 2002 and 2012, students entering RRCC who were not prepared to do college-level work rose from 25% to 51%.

Red Rocks Community College values Inclusiveness. This value is expressed when we:

- Develop procedures and programs that weave diversity throughout the daily work of the college;
- Demonstrate respect for differences among students and within the community in all we do as a college;
- Expect students to share that same respect and communicate that expectation to them often, both in and out of the classroom;
- Develop our students' and our own abilities to recognize and engage with human differences through understanding and inclusion.

Red Rocks Community College values Communication. This value is expressed when we:

- Practice meaningful, considerate communication with our students and with each other;
- Whenever possible seek opportunities for an unconstrained exchange of information and ideas through dialogue that is timely, respectful, and appreciative of others;
- Give appropriate feedback in a way that makes room for others' perspectives and encourages rather than constrains continuing dialogue;
- Purposefully build our ability to communicate effectively as part of working and learning with others.

These Mission, Vision, and Values statements guide the four Strategic Plan Goals: Student Success, Community Engagement, Institutional Renewal, and Developing a Culture of Inquiry and Evidence. Under each Strategic Goal are listed the Strategic Directions through which we will accomplish the Goals, and the Key Measures of Success that will allow us to gauge our progress and determine when the Goal is met.

Our Strategic Plan is also based upon the needs of our students and the communities we serve. Central to our mission is building community through student success. The genius of a comprehensive community college, such as RRCC, is found in how it brings together career and technical education, the first two years of a four-year degree, pre-collegiate remediation, workforce training, and personal development in life and career skills. The exchange among faculty, staff, and students with a variety of backgrounds and goals create a unique type of learning community.

About half of RRCC students are 24 years old or younger and half are 25 years old and older. The average student age typically varies between 27 and 28 years old.

The very strength of RRCC - the multiplicity of student and community needs and programs - must be balanced with careful planning, data-informed resource allocation, and resource management based upon ongoing assessment of results. We have developed the following Strategic Goals, Directions, and Key Measures of Success to achieve

this balance and thereby carry this unique institution of higher education - Red Rocks Community College - further into the 21st century, all the while building on our past success to take advantage of the challenging opportunities for improvement that face us.



STRATEGIC GOALS, DIRECTIONS, AND INDICATORS

Strategic Goal 1 – Student Success

The focal point and ultimate measure of all we do is student success. RRCC is committed to a comprehensive, coordinated focus on improving student success. We will improve learning outcomes through assessment and learning, co-curricular outcomes assessment, and learning support practices. Based upon assessment results, we will engage in and develop best and promising practices in support of intellectual, social, and personal development. We will focus on the achievement of student learning outcomes through the active involvement of all employees. We will also increase our engagement of students, employers, partners and other stakeholders in order to enroll, motivate, and assist students in achieving their goals.

Key Strategic Directions and Indicators

1. Annually increase remedial course completion rates through curricular re-work and intensive advising to complete implementation of the CCCS remedial task force recommendations by fall term of 2016. Indicators for this strategic direction are remedial course and course sequence completion.

2. Analyze and respond to student loss and momentum points through systemic and coordinated instructional and support strategies to improve retention and goal completion for all students. Indicators for this strategic direction are course completion in “gatekeeper” and general education courses, student retention, completion, and transfer rates.
3. Continue to develop academic programming in such areas such as the Physician Assistant Master’s Degree, terminal bachelor degrees, sustainability, “green economy”, and STEM and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) initiatives that distinguish RRCC as an innovator in educating our students. Indicators for this strategic direction are successful development of programs and curricula, accreditation of programs, and assessment of outcomes.
4. Develop ongoing program review procedures for all academic and non-academic programs using the outcomes assessment results for program improvement. Indicators for this strategic direction are fully implemented review with application of results to course and pedagogical design, reflective practices, teaching and learning, and planning and budgeting.
5. Expand the innovative use of instructional technology, including increased student engagement with technology, faculty development in teaching and learning, and the development of a systemic approach to technology throughout the whole college. Indicators for this strategic direction are completion and implementation of an RRCC technology Plan, in-house professional development programs for instructional design, and assessment of outcomes.
6. Conduct facilities program planning to resolve physical plant issues in ways that are appropriate and adequate to the needs of instructional programs and support services, including putting environmental stewardship into practice within the RRCC college community. Indicators for this strategic direction are completion of plans to develop new space at the Arvada campus, renovate the Lakewood campus, expand “green” initiatives, and upgrade existing classroom and laboratory learning environments.

RRCC had lower instructional costs per student than two-thirds of all other medium-size public community colleges in the United States. RRCC had lower administrative costs per student than 98% of all other medium-size public community colleges in the United States.

7. Improve student matriculation, advising, and support processes to increase enrollment growth and reduce time to completion, with a focus on implementation of “Smart Scheduling” to help students obtain the classes they need when they need them. Indicators for this strategic direction are the proportion of students who accumulate at least 15 and 30 credit hours, student time to completion, and RRCC rank relative to peers regarding the number of degrees awarded per \$100,000 in total operating (E&G) revenues.

Strategic Goal 2 – Community Engagement

RRCC will also respond to the changing demographics of the communities we serve through efforts to increase participation, completion, and transfer rates of underserved and underachieving students. RRCC will strive to increase access to higher education through efforts to increase affordability and reduce student debt and default rates. This will be accomplished through robust partnerships between our programs and communities that energize regional economic potential. We will also expand targeted

outreach programs, align recruitment and retention efforts to meet enrollment management goals, and strengthen fiscal stability through a strategic program mix.

The RRCC 2011-12 combined Graduation and Transfer rate for first-time, full-time students was 56.9%. This rate placed RRCC in the 95th percentile among medium-sized public community colleges in the United States. Only 5% of the colleges had a higher rate.

Key Strategic Directions and Indicators

1. Enhance access to, and through, postsecondary education to ensure that RRCC reflects the changing demographics of the service area while reducing attainment gaps among students from underserved communities. Indicators for this strategic direction are comparison of student demographics to service area, enrollment growth for all students, and underserved student enrollment growth compared to the RRCC service area.
2. Reduce disparities in persistence, completion, and transfer rates for underrepresented students. Indicators for this strategic direction are academic progress tracking for key student groups, and comparison of retention, graduation, and transfer rates for between underserved and non-underserved students.
3. Continue and expand efforts to lower student debt load and financial aid default rates by improving student financial knowledge, and by coordinating financial aid counseling with orientation, student skills development, advising, and student academic planning. Indicators for this strategic direction are financial aid default

rates, number of RRCC student scholarship recipients and level of internal and external foundation donations.

4. Collaborate with community organizations and employers to strategically expand programs and services that benefit the community while strengthening RRCC's identity, that build upon outreach efforts by faculty and staff, and which position RRCC as a consistently viable option for education and training needs. Indicators for this strategic direction are: the number of workforce development programs and students served, and the number and type of community partnerships.
5. Develop resources and partnerships that will allow RRCC to meet projected enrollment demands while promoting affordability, accessibility, and efficiency, such as K-12 partnerships that build concurrent enrollment with Jefferson County Schools. Indicators for this strategic direction are the number of high school graduates who enter RRCC with prior credits and concurrent headcount enrollment by RRCC program.
6. Grow and enhance international education and international educational experiences for students. Indicators for this strategic direction are the number and type of overseas partnerships and study abroad programs, and articulation with Common Learning Outcomes and relevant RRCC departments to assess potential student learning outcomes, curricular enhancement, and the possibility of a Global Preparedness Certificate.
7. Develop, design, and implement studies to accurately define the nature of the higher education market in the west metro region and for RRCC programs with a state, national, and international reach. Indicators for this strategic direction are average effectiveness ratings from employer advisory committees, and completion of a RRCC Marketing Plan with assessed outcomes data.

The average Colorado student leaves college with a debt between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Average student debt for RRCC students at graduation has increased from \$9,687 in 2007 to \$13,154 in 2011.

Strategic Goal 3 – Institutional Renewal

To serve our students and communities, we must continuously examine and renew ourselves as individuals and as a college. We need a more cohesive institutional culture that promotes professional development for all faculty and staff through excellent support, state-of-the-art technologies, and growth opportunities. To accomplish this,

we will assess the performance and effectiveness of RRCC information and knowledge management systems, with emphasis on identification of student, employee, and other stakeholder needs. We will also develop institution-wide program review that will document and apply assessment results to change the way we work so that RRCC can be more flexible in response to economic and technological change, and better adapt to changes in the composition and needs of the communities we serve.

Key Strategic Directions and Indicators

1. Digitize student information for advising and scheduling purposes and make this information accessible to both general and academic advisors. Indicators for this strategic direction are successful implementation and application of new Banner system tools, the continuing implementation of the AQIP Action Project on “Smart Scheduling”, and the percentage of students with a career or academic plan.
2. Develop the RRCC technological and facilities infrastructure, and use it to enhance and develop online programs, and to increase more effective program and service delivery through shared information, communication, and coherent understanding of how RRCC works. Indicators for this strategic direction are the development of a service center for adjunct faculty to address support needs for teaching and learning, and the development of well-publicized repositories and web accessible tools to share common, accurate, and reliable information among staff and faculty. We will also survey faculty, staff, and student engagement, needs and satisfaction.
3. Elevate all aspects of the learning environment through instructor professional development that enables the creation of new platforms and methods to teach and support students using new methods of course delivery, teaching practices, and coordinated supplemental learning and advising. Indicators for this strategic direction are documented changes and upgrades to the technological infrastructure, and the number of courses using alternative delivery formats and pedagogical approaches based upon instructional technology.
4. Encourage hiring practices that will result in a faculty and staff that is more reflective of the RRCC student profile and the service area. Indicators for this strategic direction are completion of faculty and staff demographic profiles compared to students and service area, results from implementation of recommendations from the Diversity Strategic Plan, and a student and faculty climate survey.
5. Continue to develop health and wellness services and training for students, staff and faculty, integrating these efforts with common learning and co-curricular

student outcomes. Indicators for this strategic direction are completion and implementation of facilities program plans, and the development and assessment of common learning and co-curricular student outcomes.

RRCC had lower instructional costs per student than two-thirds of all other medium-size public community colleges in the United States. RRCC had lower administrative costs per student than 98% of all other medium-size public community colleges in the United States.

6. Expand professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. To increase opportunities we need to: (1) evaluate current expenditures and results, (2) explore how faculty and staff can access these opportunities, (3) integrate professional development and performance evaluation and (4) explore the intersection of professional development with outreach and partnerships. Indicators for this strategic

direction are the number of professional development protocols completed for employees, findings from an annual report on professional development expenditures and results, and the results from implementation of recommendations from the Diversity Strategic Plan,. We will also survey college climate and effectiveness of professional development programs for employee satisfaction and performance.

7. Implement the recommendations from Process Improvement Teams and the Enrollment Management Task Force to increase enrollment growth and reduce time to completion. Indicators for this strategic direction are outcomes assessment from implementation of recommendations from the Student Services and Enrollment Management Task Forces. We will also measure student enrollment “yield” and track subsequent student persistence rates through the curricular sequence.

Strategic Goal 4 – A Culture of Inquiry and Evidence

We will develop a culture of inquiry and evidence that promotes commitment of faculty, staff, and students to accountability for learning excellence through the achievement of measureable learning and co-curricular outcomes. We will promote innovative assessment methods and data-informed decisions that foster adaptability in programs and services. We will share and implement innovative and best practices that improve learning outcomes, resource stewardship, and effectiveness measurement that meet the highest standards in program and service delivery. We will also develop systematic and comprehensive processes to identify, select, manage, and distribute information related to planning and improvement of institutional effectiveness. This will allow us to

examine in greater depth and breadth whether the way we spend our time and money is advancing mission accomplishment, or if an alternative may be more effective.

Key Strategic Directions and Indicators

1. Develop and assess Common Student Learning Outcomes and fully integrate them into the RRCC curriculum and program student learning outcomes. Indicators for this strategic direction are documented use of common learning outcomes assessment results in resource allocation, and regular reporting in the RRCC Systems Portfolio toward re-affirmation of accreditation.
2. Align student organizations with co-curricular learning goals, and assess outcomes using these co-curricular goals to guide student club and other learning environment activities. Indicators for this strategic direction are co-curricular student learning outcomes assessment, and survey data on student needs, engagement, satisfaction, and climate.
3. Refine our understanding of student goals and the student experience at RRCC and use this information to establish a clear path to degree, certificate, or other goal completion. Indicators for this strategic direction are the number of undergraduate credentials per 100 students enrolled at a level at or among the top 25% of peer institutions, and RRCC graduation rates compared to the top 25% of peer institutions. We will also track student job placement after graduation and student performance at transfer institutions.
4. Based upon data-informed understanding of student and stakeholder needs and outcomes, establish new instructional delivery and support centers in such areas as Weekend College, Diversity and Inclusion, and a Career Center to help students explore different career options and to plan educational pathways. Indicators for this strategic direction are the documented establishment of new centers with assessed outcomes, and the results from implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and the Enrollment Management Plan. We will also collect survey data concerning student needs, engagement, satisfaction, and climate.
5. Develop an academic master plan with campus-wide goals to provide guidance for instructional programs, identify needed co-curricular support, and to address changes in student and service area needs. Indicators for this strategic direction are

In 2011, RRCC had an attrition rate (students who dropped out rather than completing goals) of 18.4% for first-time, full-time students. This represents an attrition cost of about \$967,000 to the college.

the completion and implementation of an academic master plan, and use of reporting results from the Academic Master Plan in institutional planning, resource allocation, and in the RRCC Systems Portfolio.

6. Develop and link co-curricular student learning outcomes that encourage student engagement in learning and development, including work-study and the transitioning of internships into experiential education for students at all stages of their academic career. Indicators for this strategic direction are the number of internships and other career learning opportunities for students, and student performance on state and national certification examinations.
7. Continuously improve programs and services through a systemic and ongoing process of data collection and dissemination to support and align strategic planning, assessment, and program and service review. Indicators for this strategic direction are successful development of an institution-wide assessment plan, a repository for assessment data across the institution, and annual reporting and updates to the RRCC System Portfolio based on key performance indicators and assessment results. A final indicator is the successful re-affirmation of AQIP accreditation in 2018-2019.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND ALIGNMENT

The Goals, Strategic Directions, and Performance Indicators in the RRCC Strategic Plan are inextricably linked to the CDHE and CCCS master plans. Performance measurement and metrics in this plan center on two important indicator arrays: (1) the performance contract between the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Community College System and (2) the Colorado Department of Higher Education indicators and metrics for performance funding. The key performance measurements common to both are:

1. Improvement of student success through increased completion rates in basic skills education, successful college course completion, increased persistence through the college curriculum, and reduction in average time to credential;
2. Increased student attainment of postsecondary credentials through annual increases in degrees and certificates, and transfer rates to four-year institutions;
3. Enhanced access to postsecondary education that reflects changing community demographics while annually reducing attainment gaps and increasing transfer rates for students from underserved communities;

RRCC students transfer most often to Metropolitan State University – Denver, the University of Colorado – Denver, and the Colorado School of Mines.

4. Develop resources to meet projected enrollment and program demands while promoting affordability, accessibility, and efficiency.

These four areas of performance measurement, along with the specific metrics associated with them, are incorporated under the four goals of the RRCC Strategic Plan. These arrays of performance indicators will provide guidance for goal accomplishment, and to guide annual institutional planning and resource allocation.

These arrays of performance indicators will help us determine the extent to which our efforts help us meet a key integral focus- the delineation of clear, coherent educational pathways for students that promote student achievement and goal completion. As a corollary of that focus, we also seek to develop the capacity of our students to be self-directed learners based on assessment of their own learning preferences and needs. This begins with insuring that our students, our community partners in K-12 education, employers, and the community at large all know what is required for a postsecondary education at RRCC.

To be coherent, a pathway must combine practices and programs in a way that will minimize the time required to be ready for college-level work, and to enter an approved program of study. A coherent pathway also has clear articulation with support services and information that help us track student progress, provide feedback for programs concerning student goal accomplishment, and customize intervention when required. Coherent pathways are open to innovation, leveraging technology, and collaboration to improve student learning and instructional delivery. They also offer alternatives, have clear on and off-ramps, contextualize instruction, and are open to a variety of learning strategies to develop knowledge and build skills.

Performance measurement in this plan will use multiple measures to evaluate how well we are building coherent educational pathways, and consequently increasing student goal accomplishment. We anticipate that these metrics will also evolve as our evaluation of the data continues, as will the assessment and on-going planning processes themselves.



IN SUMMARY

The changes we observe nationally, in Colorado, and in our service area all indicate that Community Colleges need to be redesigned for new times. Red Rocks Community College needs to be ready! Red Rocks Community College will commit to:

1. A focus on access AND student success;
2. Establishing clear, coherent educational pathways;
3. Achieving high rates of student success;

4. Eradication of achievement gaps;
5. Developing a culture of evidence and collaboration.

To support these changes will require supportive action in four critical areas.

1. Effecting this transformation will require a clear and steady commitment to professional development across the institution, focused relentlessly on student success and completion.
2. Attention to the relationship between the learning environment and facilities is fundamental, and should be addressed in regard to ongoing review of the quality of facilities, instructional delivery needs, and ease of access to critical information, such as room numbering.
3. High priority should be assigned to efforts to provide community college faculty, staff, and students with access to state-of-the-art technologies designed to foster instructional innovation and effectiveness.
4. We need to reduce “silos” within the college and expand support for employees through a shared understanding of what we do and what resources are available, as well as expanding support in several critical areas, such as a service center for both full-time and adjunct faculty.

We hope that by academic year 2018-19 the end result of this plan will be a more nimble and resilient organization, and an exceptional workplace environment that makes RRCC the employer of choice” for a diverse workforce engaged in continuous quality improvement of our learning environment. We hope you join us on our journey. It promises to be an exciting one!

