

Complete 2021

EDUCATING FOR A COMPETITIVE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Community College System

Strategic Plan for 2021

At the August 2014 Chancellor's Annual Planning Retreat, Dr. Glenn DuBois unveiled the newly proposed strategic plan that will help Virginia's Community Colleges focus on one goal through 2021:

Virginia's Community Colleges will lead the Commonwealth in the education of its people by tripling the number of credentials awarded for economic vitality and individual prosperity.

Historically, the development of each VCCS strategic plan has focused on only one purpose: To address Virginia's unmet education and training needs.

Strategic planning often invokes a natural tendency to focus internally. The community college mission compels us, however, to look externally and to focus on ways we can better provide access and support for every Virginian who wants to pursue a higher education to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.

Complete 2021 represents the third plan created through this focus. It follows *Dateline 2009* and *Achieve 2015*, our current plan that expires at the end of the current academic year.

PROCESS

Over the past year, a committee of representatives from across the Virginia's Community Colleges engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive process for creating a new six-year strategic plan for the system's 23 colleges. A committee of State Board members, presidents, vice presidents, deans, faculty, staff, and student representatives from across Virginia's Community Colleges developed the proposed strategic plan.

The process began with a series of town hall meetings held around Virginia to gather perspectives from the people our colleges serve. Next, the committee examined higher education reform proposals from federal and state governments; higher education think-tank reports; national and state data about higher education trends; as well as strategic plans for other organizations. It also heard from national experts on higher education trends, and reviewed survey data from VCCS employees and students.

ANALYSIS RESULTS

The analysis led the committee to a clear conclusion: *Virginia needs its colleges to produce a dramatically higher number of meaningful postsecondary credentials to support economic vitality.* More Virginians must complete degrees, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates and industry recognized

certifications. Their prosperity, and that of the entire state, depends on their success. It is no longer good enough for students to leave a community college with merely a “bag of credits” that may satisfy an undisclosed personal goal. It is important to note that the goal focuses on credentials earned, not individuals served, and will be measured in a clear and transparent manner.

MOVING FORWARD

Over the course of the coming academic year, this proposed strategic plan will be discussed at VCCS constituency and peer group meetings, culminating in the State Board for Community Colleges formally endorsing the plan early in 2015.

In order to make this one strategic goal achievable and meaningful, Virginia’s Community Colleges and the System office will focus efforts in five specific areas:

- Elevating Virginia’s skilled workforce;
- Providing educational access for all Virginians;
- Reinventing the way community colleges help students succeed;
- Connecting Virginia’s diverse educational opportunities; and
- Preserving affordable college access.

Community colleges are most effective when they address the needs of their own communities. Each VCCS college will be asked to identify those areas that will best fit the specific needs of their communities, and create strategic plans and goals which will help to meet the overarching VCCS goal of tripling credentials. Each employee of the VCCS should ask, “How does what I do help to meet the overarching VCCS goal?”

STUDENT SUCCESS BECOMES THE PRIORITY

In pursuing this one strategic goal, VCCS colleges will need to focus on maintaining high quality standards while reinventing the ways in which we approach helping students achieve those high standards. Together, we will help our students view the attainment of each credential as a stepping-stone to acquiring another one. We will do a better job tracking the credit and non-credit credentials that we help students acquire and we will work smarter and more efficiently assisting students to conclude their time with us having acquired a credential that is meaningful for their future.

The pursuit of this one goal requires a renewed commitment to student success from faculty who teach in the liberal arts as well as from those who teach in career disciplines. Staff and administrators will also focus on developing new strategies for credential attainment, as colleges implement the performance based budgeting plan approved by the State Board last year.

The next six years will be both challenging and rewarding for everyone in the VCCS who is committed to helping each student achieve a higher education for their own personal prosperity and for the economic vitality of the commonwealth.