



Richland Community College
FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

2020-2023



WHAT DID WE AIM FOR IN 2020-2023?

Goal 1:

Provide relevant, high-quality learning opportunities.

- Improve the quality of learning using a Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) to provide professional development.
- Expand educational partnerships to create cohesive transitions (high school, universities, and industry).
- Determine relevant learning opportunities to grow communities.

Goal 2:

Foster student success and completion.

- Strengthen Richland's relationship with service area stakeholders.
- Increase student retention.
- Increase student support services.

Goal 3:

Enhance and cultivate partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region.

- Connect with District employers to identify needed skills and collaborate in the delivery of training opportunities.
- Share information regarding Richland activities and opportunities with internal and external communities to better connect with and inform individuals.
- Deliver data-informed, innovative programs and services that align with the rapidly developing workforce to become a labor market-responsive community college.

GOAL 4:

Create a sound financial system that maintains long-term operational funding, promotes operational sustainability, and utilizes an effective organizational structure.

- Position the College for financial sustainability that addresses varying income sources.
- Seek alternative funding sources.
- Enhance student learning spaces.
- Enhance faculty and staff training options and modalities.
- Create an effective equipment replacement plan for all College computing equipment.
- Maintain and enhance the IT infrastructure to support College operations and to produce consistent content delivery.

2020-2023 STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Goal 1:

Provide relevant, high-quality learning opportunities.

- **Dr. Denise Crews,**
Co-Champion
- **Ellen Colbeck,**
Co-Champion
- **Jessica Pickel,**
Co-Champion (final report)
- **Dr. Kona Jones,**
Co-Champion (final report)

- Alex Berry
- Dr. Leanne Brooks
- Jody Burtnett
- Matt Cardinal
- Louise Greene
- Dr. Kona Jones
- Tara Mata
- Dr. Chris Merli
- Dr. Priscilla Palmer
- Sam Perryman
- Jessica Pickel
- Chris Senger
- Jason Smith
- Brenden Wilson
(Student)

Goal 2:

Foster student success and completion.

- **Dr. Isaac Zuniga,**
Co-Champion
- **Andy Hynds,**
Co-Champion

- Sally Anselmo
- Shelly Baldwin
- Shannice Berry
- Prem Chandra
- Dr. Laurie Hughes
- Michaila Long (student)
- Meredith Johnson-Palmer
- Diana Watts

Goal 3:

Enhance and cultivate partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region.

- **Rev. Courtney Carson,**
Co-Champion
- **Joe Feinstein,**
Co-Champion
- **Julie Melton,**
Co-Champion (final report)

- Scott Broyles
- Seth Brozio
- Tony Crystal
- Jeff Davison
- Karen Lockhart
- John Oliver
- Julie Pangrac
- Terrence Taylor
- Dr. Clarise Thomas
- Brian Tucker
- Tracy Withrow

GOAL 4:

Create a sound financial system that maintains long-term operational funding, promotes operational sustainability, and utilizes an effective organizational structure.

- **Greg Florian,**
Co-Champion
- **Megan Moore,**
Co-Champion
- **Joe Feinstein,**
Co-Champion (final report)
- **Tiffany Nichols,**
Co-Champion (final report)

- Robin Bollhorst
- Madonna Brown
- Jody Chambers
- Steve Gilbertz
- Joy Harvey



GOAL #1

.....

Provide relevant, high-quality learning opportunities.

Goal 1:

Provide relevant, high-quality learning opportunities.

During 2020-2023, we focused on five key strategies to achieve our goal of providing relevant, high-quality learning opportunities. Through our commitment to teaching and student learning outcomes, we achieved the following results:

Develop a Teaching & Learning Center (TLC) that includes both an online component and a physical presence on campus.

The College's commitment to teaching and learning was demonstrated by the opening of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) on the Richland Community College campus in January 2022.

The timely investment in space and staff provided faculty and students with resources and needed support with the shift to online and hybrid classes during and post-COVID. In the fall of 2023, we currently have 47% of students registered in online and hybrid classes, and 29% of all credit hours are online or hybrid.

Expand the Transfer Academy.

Richland increased focus on expanding the Transfer Academy/Dual Credit Programs by establishing an AA Pathway with Decatur Public Schools (DPS) at part of the Prep Academy. In May 2021, 56 DPS students were accepted into the first cohort of the Prep Academy with anticipated graduation of May 2025. In its third year, currently 154 students in 3 cohorts are enrolled in the Prep Academy.

From 2021- 2023, dual credit hours increased from 7169 in Academic Year 2021 to 8,336 in Academic Year 23 for a total increase of 1,167 credit hours or 38.9 full time equivalents (FTE).

College administrators continued to investigate other opportunities to expand AA pathways to other high schools in the Richland Community College district. In the spring of 2023, Richland hosted an Education Symposium in partnership with Heartland Tech Academy to explore opportunities and barriers for dual credit offerings at our area high schools and to help inform planning for the [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#).

Develop an education pathway in which students can finish a bachelor's degree in Decatur.

Grow Your Own (GYO) was implemented at Richland in 2022 to strengthen the teacher pipeline, focusing on supporting homegrown, diverse candidates for teaching careers in our local community. 4 students were enrolled in the program in the fall of 2022, and 19 students are enrolled in the fall of 2023.

The Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) program was implemented in 2022 at Richland to address the high demand for early childhood educators, advance racial equity and improve accessibility. 27 students are enrolled in the ECACE program in the fall of 2023, and general enrollment in Early Childhood Education has also increased to 67 students.

Develop more transfer pathways (program/major specific) to 4-year institutions.

Richland continued to develop more transfer pathways to 4-year institutions with additional articulation agreements between Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, and Southern Illinois University. The Saluki Step Ahead Sub agreement was signed in 2022 to create a pathway at SIU for Accounting, Business and Administration, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Psychology, Health Care Management, and Radiologic Sciences programs.

Develop registered apprenticeships for industry clusters identified by the Illinois Economic Plan.

Richland created apprenticeship programs with Abbott Ambulance Services, ADM, and Caterpillar in healthcare and manufacturing industry clusters; however, these programs have not been registered with the Department of Labor. Employers seek to continue partnering with Richland without the "registered" moniker.

From the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the College received a \$450,000 Illinois Work Pre-Apprenticeship grant to develop the Construction Management Training Program in early 2023. Over the last year, we have graduated 3 cohorts, and completers will be listed in a registry to connect them to future jobs and create a pipeline for future employers.



GOAL #2

Foster student success
and completion.

Goal 2:

Foster student success and completion.

Although the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted our initial outlined strategies to achieve Goal 2, Richland was able to pivot and create opportunities to serve and support our traditional and non-traditional students by identifying and removing basic needs barriers. During 2020-2023, we focused on three key strategies to achieve our goal of fostering student success and completion.

Strengthen Richland's relationship with service area stakeholders.

In early 2021, District 61 and Richland Community established The Prep Academy – offering selected students the opportunity to earn their high school diploma AND an Associate of Arts Degree from Richland upon completion of the 4-year program during high school. This intentional program goes beyond dual credit, ensuring that students have an equal opportunity to a quality education.

In the spring of 2023, Richland hosted an Education Symposium in partnership with Heartland Tech Academy to explore opportunities and barriers for dual credit offerings at our area high schools and to help inform planning for the [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#).

Richland continued to focus on an increased connection among full-time Richland faculty, dual credit administrators and students by hiring Dual Credit Coordinator in the fall of 2023.

Increase student retention.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions eliminating most initiatives, we will see measurable increases in enrollment and completions from 2020-2022 in targeted non-traditional populations.

- Increases in unduplicated headcount for African-American students (28.5%) and Hispanic students (67.74%).
- Increases in unduplicated number of completions for African-American students (21.65%) and Hispanic students (27.78%).
- Additionally, after a loss of enrollment of new students in the fall of 2020 (-43.31%), we rebounded with a 14.3% increase in the fall of 2021 (223 new students) and 6.73% increase in the fall of 2022 (238 new students).

Increase student support resources.

With support from the Richland Community College Foundation, we expanded our focus on student support to identify and address student basic need barriers, included scholarships, mental health, food insecurity, transportation and emergency relief.

- From 2020-2023, the Foundation awarded nearly \$4M in donor-funded scholarships. Additionally, more than \$200,000 in emergency relief grants have been awarded to support students during unexpected crisis situations.
- In partnerships with Crossing Healthcare, Richland opened onsite Mental Health in the spring of 2022. This partnership transitioned to Memorial Health in the fall of 2023, providing students access to on-site mental health counselors 40 hours/week.
- In spring 2023, a partnership with the Decatur Transit Authority was developed to offer transportation at no cost to Richland students. In the first quarter of the partnership, nearly 1500 rides were taken by Richland students, helping remove the transportation barrier.

Through private support, Richland is breaking down barriers and transforming lives. Our commitment to providing scholarships and educational opportunities not only empowers our students but also strengthens our community.



GOAL #3

.....

Enhance and cultivate partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region.

Goal 3:

Enhance and cultivate partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region.



Over the last 4 years, collaboration has been central to the success of Richland Community College allowing us to achieve our goal of **enhancing and cultivating partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region**. During the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, we achieved the following results:

Connect with District employers to identify needed skills and collaborate in the delivery of training opportunities.

Richland Community College has a significant impact on the local workforce by equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in a rapidly evolving job market. The College's emphasis on applied learning, internships, and partnerships with local businesses further enhances students' readiness for the workplace and as a result plays a vital role in strengthening the local economy and providing a skilled workforce for the region.

- In February 2022, Richland Community College received a \$3.2M grant from the Decatur Memorial Foundation to grow enrollment in nursing and clinical programs by 75% to help build a well-educated, diverse and resilient workforce through EnRich Healthcare. As of the fall of 2023, we have over 400 students enrolled in the EnRich Healthcare program - 77% of the participants are minorities and 88% come from a low socio-economic status.
- In early 2022, ADM partnered with Richland to develop and implement an educational pathway for Process Technicians to receive paid training and hands-on learning experiences. ADM's PTEC Program is a 28-week program providing entry-level production specialists the opportunity to learn the common systems used in a processing facility (Level, Temperature, pH and Pressure). Employees gain onsite training on ADM's Decatur campus, all while working in a fast-paced environment to complete various processes and improve personal performance.
- In fall 2022, Richland received the Pre-Apprenticeship Grant through Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). The Pre-Apprenticeship Program at Richland aims to address the inequitable employment gaps in the target population by providing a pathway to a high-paying career with benefits. Additionally, the program will ensure a competent workforce in the building and construction trades where market trends clearly show a need for more trained workers. These goals will be met by preparing participants

to enter a Department of Labor (DOL) registered apprenticeship program and providing them with industry-recognized credentials to increase their career options.

- Richland Community College is a primary partner in a private-public partnership and is currently at the center of innovation receiving a \$15.3M grant from the State of Illinois in fall 2022 to contribute to the creation of an \$53M Electric Vehicle Innovation Cluster, including a Climatic Center for Innovation & Research Facility. This will support the growth of the EV sector and electrification in Illinois by creating training programs and state-of-the-art facilities for research and development, which includes a full-scale climactic center for testing and simulations. The facility will be located on the T/CCI Decatur campus.

While each of partnerships provide it's own unique educational pathways, collectively they position Richland Community College to be a trailblazer in designing innovative curriculum and developing customized training programs tailored to the specific needs of our local workforce.

Goal 3:

Enhance and cultivate partnerships in business, education, government, and communities to meet current needs of students and emerging trends of the region.

Continued

Share information regarding Richland activities and opportunities with internal and external communities to better connect with and inform individuals.

Richland's Marketing Department just completed a strategic marketing assessment to ensure the communication efforts across the College are consistent through branding and messaging. Guided by the Strategic Marketing Plan, the marketing department has implemented both traditional print and digital modalities to share and disseminate information across our District.

- The pathway brochure provides information on both training and transfer pathways at Richland to best serve the needs of our students. This brochure provides a high-level overview of the benefits of attending Richland, programs offered, and steps to apply.
- Corresponding rack cards detail each program at Richland, providing an overview of the program, detailing program benefits, listing degree and certificate options, and offering testimonials from current students and alumni. Each rack card directs students to the program page on the Richland website where they can learn more about pathways, costs, course requirements, careers and contact information.
- In the next phase of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Marketing team will be redesigning the public website with the key requirement of simple navigation and ease of access. This process kicked off in fall 2023 with anticipated go-live by FY25.

During Community College Month (April) in 2022 and 2023, the College hosted a State of the College Luncheon to provide an update on the present state of Richland and its impact on communities we serve. These events each had over 125 attendees from across the community.

Deliver data-informed, innovative programs and services that align with the rapidly developing workforce to become a labor market-responsive community college.

Richland's resurgence from the COVID-19 pandemic allowed us to be the critical piece to provide skilled training opportunities to meet the challenges facing our workforce.

- Based on national trends of nursing shortages and shrinking labor pools, we established a partnership with Decatur Memorial Hospital to expand our Healthcare Program and develop a pipeline of diverse healthcare workers.
- Through support of the Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI), Richland is addressing the nationwide supply chain issues by growing the CDL Program and expanding our fleet of vehicles.
- In order to support the evolution of minority small business owners, Richland developed the Minority Mentor Protégé Program. Since 2020, this program has provided the foundation for 19 minority small business in our community and is expanding with focus on owner/operators.

Richland employs a unique Trauma Informed/ Resilience Focused Essential Skills curriculum within our EnRich Program that confronts adverse childhood experiences of trauma and prepares participants to be culturally competent, trauma-informed, team-focused and resilient employees contributing to a diverse and resilient workforce environment.

- Since 2020, the EnRich Program has served over 1500 individuals, with 89% from underrepresented/ underserved communities.
- 55% of the 1,500 individuals that completed the EnRich program were second-chance citizens, indicating prior incarceration or involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Nearly 90% of all graduates of the EnRich Program remain employed one year after graduation, ensuring that our completers are thriving in the workplace.



GOAL #4

.....

Create a sound financial system that maintains long-term operational funding, promotes operational sustainability, and utilizes an effective organizational structure.

Goal 4:

Create a sound financial system that maintains long-term operational funding, promotes operational sustainability, and utilizes an effective organizational structure.

.....

During 2020-2023, Richland focused on six key strategies to **create a sound financial system that maintains long-term operational funding, promotes operational sustainability, and utilizes an effective organizational structure.** Through our commitment to creating a sound financial system, we achieved the following outcomes:

Position the College for financial sustainability that addresses varying income sources.

Nearly one year ahead of schedule, Richland achieved our goal of having a general fund balance equal to 6 months of current budget expenses.

Seek alternative funding sources.

Richland has seen a significant increase in grant funding with a current portfolio of \$25M in grants from state and local funding agencies. This alternative funding has allowed us to grow partnerships, programs, and staffing to support our students and meet the needs of our region.

Enhance student learning spaces.

Moving students and staff off campus due to COVID-19 allowed us to expedite the completion of Master Plan Phase 1, and as a result, construction was complete prior to students returning on campus fall 2021. Completion of Master Plan Phase 1 included modernized science labs, learning spaces, technology, and instructional equipment.

In spring 2022, Richland broke ground on the new Agriculture Building. This \$3M investment from the College, along with a \$1M private gift, will develop and train a large talent pipeline that prepares students for and places them in agricultural career opportunities present in our community.

Enhance faculty and staff training options and modalities.

- 93% of employees are in compliance with completion on online training provided through Safe Colleges, a program specifically built for higher education. Some courses are assigned at the time of employment, and annual training is assigned to all employees.
- Mandatory training for supervisors and staff has been completed by 100% of staff.

Create an effective equipment replacement plan for all College computing equipment.

Richland's IT team has been working tirelessly to replace 90% of the obsolete equipment on our campus. The remaining 10% will be replaced during FY23.

Maintain and enhance the IT infrastructure to support College operations and to produce consistent content delivery. (this needs enhanced)

- Outdated wireless access points in all College facilities replaced with 802.11ac devices to support modern hardware and density.
- Additional bandwidth available throughout the College.
- Cloud-based disaster recovery in secondary offsite location initiated.