

## *A Five-Year Strategic Plan for Iowa's System of Community Colleges*

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### **Introduction**

During the 2000 Session of the General Assembly, legislation (HF 2433) was signed into law mandating that the Community College Council, a council reporting to the Iowa State Board of Education, prepare a written five-year statewide strategic plan for Iowa's System of Community Colleges in consultation with a working group of stakeholders.

The strategic plan legislation was the outcome of the Legislature's 1999 Community College Governance Study that reaffirmed the existing governance structure, emphasizing 15 locally elected boards with oversight and coordination by the State Board of Education and the Community College Council. Iowa's System of Community Colleges is viewed as one of Iowa's most prized assets, responding to the needs of students, communities, business and industry, and the economy. The intent of the plan is to maximize this asset. The five-year strategic plan provides statewide system goals and initiatives for the system to address in order to best meet the needs of Iowa.

In July 2000, the Iowa State Board of Education appointed the Chair of the Community College Council to preside over the planning process, designated two facilitators, and convened the Stakeholders Working Group comprised of members appointed by 13 different entities, to provide input into the planning process through four day-long meetings. The planning process included the following:

1. Review of the Iowa Code establishing community colleges.
2. Review of the 15 community college strategic plans and other planning documents.
3. Review of recent state plans, including--
  - A. The New Face of Iowa (the Vision 2010 Plan)
  - B. **Growing a Workforce for Iowa**
  - C. **Education is Iowa's Future** (the State Board of Education)
  - D. **The Community Colleges of Iowa at 2000** (the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees report)
4. Review of **The Knowledge Net**, a national report on community colleges (AACC).
5. Identification of recurring themes, key assumptions, shared values, and mission and vision statements.
6. Consultation with numerous individuals, including community college presidents and staff, community college trustees, state agency administrators, and business and industry leaders.
7. Identification of goals and initiatives.

Legislation requires that the Community College Council recommend the final plan to the State Board of Education and that the plan be implemented no later than July 1, 2001.

## MISSION

**The mission of Iowa's System of Community Colleges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is to provide world-class educational and community services to meet the needs of the people of Iowa.**

## VISION

**Iowa's System of Community Colleges excels in meeting the individual learning and diverse community needs of Iowa, in preparing the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, and in growing the Iowa economy.**

## GOALS

**Goal #1: Iowa's System of Community Colleges will provide high quality, comprehensive educational programs and services accessible to all Iowans.**

### **Initiatives:**

- A. Establish programs and services to meet constituent needs through ongoing assessment and evaluation.
- B. Improve articulation of career/technical and arts/science programs across Iowa's education system (K-12, community colleges, independent colleges, and state universities) and develop an approach to resolving articulation problems, such as mediation or arbitration, in order to move toward a seamless education system.
- C. Provide incentives to develop partnerships between local community colleges, other educational entities, and K-12 districts.
- D. Partner, as requested, with K-12 districts that provide alternative high school education as a means of providing greater opportunities for students.
- E. Expand programs to meet the needs of Iowans for developmental, job training and retraining, and mandatory adult and community education in order to prepare them for success in education, the workplace, and the community.
- F. Expand the involvement of business and industry as partners with the community college system to strengthen career and technology-based education programs.
- G. Explore options for establishing an electronic system to serve as a one-stop web-site connecting Iowans to life-long learning opportunities at Iowa's community colleges and for providing individual transportable portfolios.
- H. Implement strategies to best respond to the needs of adults learning to speak and read English, with special attention to immediate language skills for the workplace.

- I. Strengthen the relationship between Iowa's System of Community Colleges and four-year institutions to address the projected shortage of teachers and administrators and the need for professional development on learning, teaching, technology and leadership.

**Goal #2: Iowa's System of Community Colleges will develop high-skilled workers to meet the demands of Iowa's changing economy.**

**Initiatives:**

- A. Seek funding for development, necessary equipment, and implementation of industry standard career and technology-based programs that are articulated with secondary schools and with four-year institutions.
- B. Increase the delivery of entrepreneurship programs and services that prepare Iowans to establish and grow their own businesses.
- C. Strengthen linkages between Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Economic Development, the Iowa Department of Education, and Iowa's System of Community Colleges to better coordinate preparation of Iowa's 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and to grow Iowa's economy.
- D. Strengthen the relationships between Iowa's System of Community Colleges and the systems serving individuals with disabilities, the incarcerated, welfare participants, single parents and displaced homemakers, older and immigrant workers, and high school dropouts in order to prepare them to be more productive workers.
- E. Prioritize addition or expansion of programs and courses to those directly related to high skill high wage careers in advanced manufacturing, information solutions, and life sciences and demand occupations documented by regional skill studies.
- F. Establish a single point-of-contact process to serve business and industries needing specific training programs delivered at multiple community colleges.
- G. Develop a recruitment program to encourage students both in and out of Iowa to enroll in targeted industry cluster programs.

**Goal #3: Iowa's System of Community Colleges will maximize financial and human resources to assure provision of comprehensive community college services to Iowans and to allow Iowa to compete on a national and international level.**

**Initiatives:**

- A. Establish a mechanism to identify the two- to five-year projected increases in costs of Iowa's System of Community Colleges.
- B. Reexamine tuition costs and available financial aid to assure continued access for students of all income levels.

- C. Reexamine the current funding mechanism that supports community colleges through state and local revenue and student tuition.
- D. Develop a compensation package for community college faculty and professional staff salaries to be commensurate with the national average within five years.
- E. Seek support from business and industry for program development and student assistance.

**Goal #4: Iowa's System of Community Colleges will demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency for achieving the system mission and goals.**

**Initiatives:**

- A. Develop a set of agreed-upon performance indicators common to all community colleges.
- B. Collect, verify, and publish community college data through the use of the MIS system.
- C. Collect one and five-year implementation plans and annual accomplishments related to the Statewide Strategic Plan from each community college and issue a statewide annual report.
- D. Establish a recognition program for exemplary activities that address the goals and initiatives of this plan.

## SHARED VALUES

**A value is something we are willing to take action on.**

**Overarching Value:** The right of all Iowans to achieve their full potential through education.

### **1. Access and Opportunity**

- a. Maintaining an open-door policy.
- b. Accessibility of high quality community college programs and services in all areas of Iowa.
- c. Affordability of education and training to all citizens.
- d. Accessibility to lifelong learning opportunities.
- e. Meeting the needs of students, including those of diverse racial and ethnic groups and diverse educational needs.

### **2. Responsiveness**

- a. Ability to be flexible.
- b. Responsiveness to economic change and crises, population changes, and the changing needs of business and industry.
- c. Responsiveness to technological advances.
- d. Expansion of access to learning and business opportunities through enhanced technology.

### **3. Collaborative Relationships**

- a. Among community colleges to strengthen programs and services.
- b. With all educational sectors—public and private, K-12, area education agencies and postsecondary—to achieve educational alignment.
- c. With business, industry, and community organizations such as area economic development groups and chambers of commerce.
- d. With and among governmental agencies.

### **4. Community and Civic Responsibility**

Assistance to local communities to address their needs, including leadership development, citizenship education, and understanding of diversity and other cultures

### **5. Local Control and Shared Responsibility**

- a. Informed decisions that address both local and state needs
- b. Communication to local and state constituents of institutional results, success and return on investment

## KEY ASSUMPTIONS IN PLANNING FOR IOWA'S SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Current and projected data in recent state plans and reports serve as the sources for the assumptions and themes identified in this paper. Documents reviewed include:

1. **The New Face of Iowa** (the Vision 2010 plan)
2. **Partnerships – Building Iowa's Workforce** (Iowa Workforce Development Strategic Plan)
3. **Growing a Workforce for Iowa** (Governor's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Council)
4. **The Community Colleges of Iowa at 2000** (Iowa Association of Community College Trustees report)
5. **Education is Iowa's Future** (the State Board of Education)
6. **The Knowledge Net**, a national report on community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges)

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1. The Iowa population will grow at a low and steady pace, but the growth will not be uniform across the state.
2. The Iowa population will become more diverse.
3. The median age of Iowans will continue to rise.
4. The percentage of Iowa high school graduates attending college will increase.
5. While the percentage of students graduating from high school will remain high, the number of students graduating from high school will decrease because of population shifts.
6. The percentage of college-bound students enrolling in Iowa's community colleges will grow.
7. Eighty-five percent (85%) of community college graduates will continue to remain in Iowa.
8. New Iowans (ethnically diverse/immigrants) will increase as a percentage of the population, and will increase the need for programs and services for English language learners.
9. Retired adults will return to the workplace and will need training
10. The need for childcare will continue to increase in part because of the high number of families where both parents are in the workplace and because of the increasing number of single parent families.

### EDUCATION

1. The majority of the current workforce will require additional training and are likely to participate in /lifelong education opportunities.
2. Community colleges in Iowa share many common priorities and resource needs. There are also priorities and needs unique to specific community colleges.

3. Significant numbers of Iowa students will require developmental education, including older students in need of basic skills refresher courses.
4. A growing number of students planning to complete a four-year degree will begin college with two years at a community college. Most first generation college students will continue to choose to attend community colleges.
5. Qualifications for employment will require increased post-secondary education.
6. Higher proportions of minority and ethnically diverse populations begin career preparation in community colleges.
7. The level of educational attainment by Iowa citizens is actually lower than that of most other states. While Iowa data shows that the vast majority of individuals over 16 are high school graduates, Iowa has a lower percentage of individuals with four-year degrees or more than most other states.
8. Iowans will have more access to education through multiple electronic delivery systems.
9. The advance of computer technology is creating a digital divide in Iowa as well as in the rest of the nation.
10. With high numbers of K-12 and postsecondary teachers, administrators and professional support personnel retiring in the next 5 years, Iowa's education system will face major personnel shortages.
11. There will be faculty shortages in technology and health related fields and compensation packages would be an issue.
12. The importance of quality career education for K-12 students will grow as Iowa works toward the goal of having the best workforce in the nation.
13. There will be pressure on education to create a more seamless delivery system.
14. Increasing numbers of high school students will complete postsecondary courses while in high school, some even completing an associate degree concurrent with high school completion.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. The shortage of skilled workers in Iowa and surrounding states will continue to be a major problem.
2. The economic growth will not be shared evenly among all populations, with the gap widening between rich and poor, the skilled and unskilled.
3. Iowa's wage level will continue to be lower than the wage levels of many surrounding states.
4. Iowa will continue to have a higher percentage of two-income households (in two-parent families) than most other states. Business and industry will continue to demand "just in time" training.
5. Iowa's economy will continue to be linked to agriculture, with an emphasis on value-added processing which will call for new skill development.
6. Business and education partnerships will continue to increase in numbers.
7. The migration of people and businesses from rural to urban areas will have a significant impact on rural Iowa.
8. Small business start-ups will continue to lag far behind most states.
9. The strong work ethic of Iowa citizens will be attractive to business and industry.

## **POLITICAL**

1. Iowa's revenue streams are projected to grow at or slightly above the rate of inflation.
2. State and federal revenues for higher education are not likely to increase proportional to the increased needs and demands for education.
3. Accountability measures for higher education will increase, with increased attention on return on investment.
4. There will be continued pressure on federal and state government entities to adopt unfunded mandates.
5. With a decreasing rural population, rural/urban equity will be an ongoing issue and unlikely to be easily resolved, which increases the importance of addressing equity of community college services across the state.
6. Balance between meeting state policy goals and local control is desirable/essential.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

1. Constantly changing technology in the workplace will require a retraining of the existing workforce.
2. Distance delivery of education through the Internet and ICN will require adaptation of curriculum and innovation in teaching strategies in order to have quality educational programs.
3. New technology will increase access to community college programs and will also increase the number of education institutions competing for the same students.
4. The rapid advance of technology will require significant investment in the technology infrastructure and equipment.
5. Iowa public policy regarding technology will seek to avoid the "digital divide" between rich and poor and urban and rural.
6. The state of Iowa will have to address infrastructure issues, including electrical power, roads, and fiber optics if the inequities between rural and urban Iowa are to be remedied.
7. As growing numbers of Iowa youth become computer literate at early ages, the education system will face increasing pressure to be on the leading edge in use of technology in the classroom.



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