SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLAN

for 2013-2018

CHANGING LIVES, CHANGING COMMUNITIES

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE (STC) is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2013. Its humble and hopeful beginning in the fall of 1993 with just over 1,000 students on a small campus in McAllen has grown to almost 31,000 students across five campuses and the eSTC virtual campus.

The last 20 years have been a time of unprecedented growth and change in Hidalgo and Starr counties with never imagined social and economic benefit to the region.

STC has served as the catalyst for regional economic development and social mobility. The College has been recognized as a world-class institution of higher education and has earned numerous recognitions for the success of its students, quality of its programs and its many special initiatives to improve the economic and social mobility of its citizens. It is no small task to achieve such growth with nationally merited scholarship and excellence. It takes bold planning, creative ideas, committed partnerships, a supportive Board of Trustees, and an unwavering commitment to change the lives of communities and to transform the quality of life in our communities. The commitment to the success of the students selecting South Texas College is an institutional priority and we all share in that commitment.

The future planning for STC continues to build on the already established foundation of serving as a dynamic world class higher education institution in a rapidly growing and developing region of deep South Texas. This five year Strategic Plan, taking us from 2013 through 2018, serves as the culmination of detailed systematic planning and includes the broad participation of faculty, staff, and students from across all five campuses. It is a commitment of South Texas College to the people of Hidalgo and Starr counties to continue improving the quality of life for our graduates, their families, and future generations. STC has made the opportunity to attend college a possibility for every child and every family. Exciting opportunities are still to come from South Texas College.

An important component of the Strategic Plan is the commitment of South Texas College to continue working collaboratively with 21 school districts across the service area to make the pathway to college completion affordable and possible for all, with high expectations for student success.

I extend deep appreciation for your commitment to the growth, development, and excellence of South Texas College.

With warm regards,

Shirley A. Reed

SHIRLEY A. REED, M.B.A., ED.D.
President

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South Texas College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097: Telephone number 404-679-4500, www.sacscoc.org) to award Bachelor's, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Arts, Associate of Science degrees, and Certificates. CT 8/13

ABOUT SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE (STC) was created on September 1, 1993, by Texas Senate Bill 251 and House Bill 1102 to serve Hidalgo and Starr counties, which are located in deep south Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border region. STC is the only community college in Texas to be legislatively established because of the compelling need for a comprehensive community college to serve the almost 700,000 residents of the region. With a 95 percent Hispanic student enrollment , these residents previously did not have access to such an institution. In the fall of 1993, STC opened its doors to just over 1,000 students on the site of what had previously been the McAllen extension center for Texas State Technical College.

Today, STC is a nationally recognized and award-winning comprehensive college serving almost 31,000 students with 2,524 faculty and staff across five full-service campuses, one virtual campus for online students and programs, and numerous dual enrollment partnering high schools. The five campuses are located as follows:

- The Pecan Campus –McAllen
- The Ramiro R. Casso Nursing and Allied Health Campus –McAllen
- The Technology Campus - McAllen
- The Mid-Valley Campus – Weslaco
- The Starr County Campus – Rio Grande City

STC's student population is

predominantly Hispanic and first-generation students. Over 75 percent of the entire student population is the first in their family to attend college and as many students are participating in need-based financial aid. The students of STC are "heroic" and rise to the challenge of high expectations established for them by STC. Their success can be seen in STC's increasing number of graduates and university transfers.

STC's National recognitions include: Community College Week's Top 100 Associate Degree & Certificate Producers, 2012 continues to rank STC in the top 100 out of more than 1,100 community colleges; Hispanic Outlook's Top 100 list ranked STC third for enrolling the most Hispanics among the nation's colleges and universities.

STC is situated in the southernmost part of Texas, just 60 miles west of South Padre Island and the Gulf of Mexico. The college is committed to providing affordable access to a quality higher education and improving the economic vitality, social mobility and overall quality of life for the people of South Texas.

In 2013, South Texas College received the Leah Meyer Austin Award for demonstrating systemic institutional changes that have resulted in noteworthy increases in student success. The success of STC is truly attributed to a visionary board of trustees, a committed faculty and staff, and the stellar students who make up the fabric of the institution.

THE VISION, PURPOSE, CORE VALUES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS CONSTITUTE THE COMPREHENSIVE **MISSION** for **SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE**

VISION STATEMENT

South Texas College is a world-class institution advancing regional prosperity through education for a better quality of life in our community.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

South Texas College is an innovative, public, post-secondary institution providing quality education and career pathways for the people and communities of Hidalgo and Starr counties. The College achieves student success, nurtures talent development, and promotes economic vitality through collaborative and creative approaches to teaching, learning, and support services.

CORE VALUES

1. Student Success: We promote student success and completion through the implementation of diverse strategies and initiatives.
2. Opportunity: We value providing access and opportunities to students to meet the needs of our communities.
3. Excellence: We value excellence in teaching, learning, and all support services.
4. Innovation: We encourage creativity and champion innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and services.
5. Community: We value engaging the community in students' learning experiences and in the positive transformation of our region.
6. Professionalism: We demonstrate professionalism through collegiality, respect, and recognition for each other.
7. Collaboration: We value collaboration and communication among STC employees and STC constituents.
8. Integrity: We value integrity through honest and transparent communication and courageous dialogue.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. South Texas College shares collective responsibility for student learning, student success, and regional prosperity.
2. Students succeed through mutual engagement with the College at each stage of their educational pathways.
3. South Texas College champions innovation through its willingness to transform the College's systems to meet the educational and workforce needs and challenges of our region.
4. Collaboration with educational and business partners is key to student, college, and community successes.

STC
South Texas College

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

*(*The development of Strategic Directions incorporated the framework recommended by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)'s report Reclaiming the American Dream. The changes recommended by this framework include changing from Fragmented Course-Taking to Clear Pathways, from Low Success Rate to High Success Rate, from Access to Access and Success, from a Culture of Isolation to Collaboration, and from Individual Faculty Prerogative to Collective Responsibility.)*

Clear Pathways

South Texas College provides students with clear pathways to facilitate coherent educational experiences and timely completion of a post-secondary credential leading to relevant employment and/or further educational experiences.

Access and Success

South Texas College is committed to increasing the college-going and college-completing rates in the region.

High Success Rate

South Texas College engages in effective, proven efforts to ensure student success and positively affect the economic and social mobility of residents in our region.

Collective Responsibility

South Texas College empowers faculty to work together within and across disciplines to design best learning experiences for students, leading to their academic success, career readiness, and timely completion.

Collaboration

South Texas College commits to effective interdepartmental and interdivisional collaborations and advances mutually beneficial community and educational partnerships that create a collective impact on student success.

Cost Efficiency

South Texas College seeks innovative redesign of college processes to promote new approaches to cost-consciousness and cost-efficiency.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION ONE

CLEAR PATHWAYS

South Texas College provides students with clear pathways to facilitate coherent educational experiences and timely completion of a post-secondary credential leading to relevant employment and/or further educational experiences.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Ensure ease of entry into clear pathways for students by redesigning enrollment processes and providing responsive student-centered services.

2. Provide customized, up-to-date analysis of educational progress and timely feedback to students by utilizing high-touch and high-tech tools and processes.

3. Increase the number of degrees and certificates in high demand, high growth professions through accelerated entry into coherent programs of study and effective career planning and advising.

4. Collaborate with K-12 institutions to provide a seamless transition from high school to college.

5. Facilitate timely matriculation and successful completion in college for Dual Enrollment students by implementing pathway initiatives.

6. Ensure smooth transfer and transfer success for students by working collaboratively with educational partners to align academic expectations and remove barriers in the transfer process.

7. Prepare certificate and degree-seeking students for the workplace by creating a career-centered college culture that provides seamless career readiness, preparation, and placement services.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION TWO

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

South Texas College is committed to increasing the college-going and college-completing rates in the region.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Promote a college-going culture through proactive outreach and marketing programs that emphasize the value of post-secondary educational credentials, including certificates, associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees.

2. Offer comprehensive academic and technical programs that are responsive to regional workforce and employer needs.

3. Provide innovative basic skills training, workforce training, and career pathway programs that promote upward educational and career mobility.

4. Deliver distance education through a comprehensive and full-service virtual campus.

5. Consistently communicate college expectations and impart the knowledge necessary to be prepared for the responsibilities of the college experience.

6. Expand community awareness of, community engagement with, and community support for South Texas College through the development and implementation of marketing strategies.

7. Identify and showcase examples of student success through marketing initiatives.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION THREE

HIGH SUCCESS RATE

South Texas College engages in effective, proven efforts to ensure student success and positively affect the economic and social mobility of residents in our region.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Accelerate the success of students who are not college prepared by implementing effective college readiness programs and developmental initiatives.

2. Facilitate successful completion of gatekeeper courses by providing students with the necessary tools, support, and interventions.

3. Ensure that students successfully navigate college processes and make continuous progress toward completion by building strong connections between students, faculty, and the college support system.

4. Empower students to achieve by embedding the knowledge and skills necessary for college success across the academic and extracurricular experiences of all students.

5. Provide exemplary, state-of-the-art services, facilities, and information technologies that support student learning.

6. Generate and utilize relevant, timely, and accurate data to implement, evaluate, and continuously improve student learning and student success initiatives.

7. Validate excellence by obtaining accreditations, external awards, recognitions, and publications.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOUR

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

South Texas College empowers faculty to work together within and across disciplines to design best learning experiences for students, leading to their academic success, career readiness, and timely completion.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Promote and implement best teaching practices through systematic professional development of all faculty.

2. Encourage deep learning through innovation in curriculum design.

3. Scale-up best teaching practices by implementing effective evaluation methods.

4. Strengthen faculty and student interaction and engagement to increase students' persistence and completion of college.

5. Drive innovations in teaching and learning by engaging in systematic leadership development.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FIVE

COLLABORATION

South Texas College commits to effective interdepartmental and interdivisional collaborations and advances mutually beneficial community and educational partnerships that create a collective impact on student success.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Make student learning the role and responsibility of all stakeholders: students, faculty, and staff at every level of the institution.

2. Set guidelines for institutionally-defined expectations of professional, productive, team-oriented behavior.

3. Design and implement a systematic approach to internal communication that supports student access and success.

4. Develop highly trained and motivated faculty and staff who are committed to student success and completion by providing comprehensive professional development programs.

5. Support collaboration among faculty, staff, students and the community through intentional design of facilities and allocation of time.

6. Promote collective responsibility for student success by establishing and sustaining collaborative community and educational partnerships.

7. Proudly and publicly measure success at every level of the organization in order to foster communication and continuous improvement.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SIX

COST EFFICIENCY

South Texas College seeks innovative redesign of college processes to promote new approaches to cost-consciousness and cost-efficiency.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Promote cost-efficiency and financial transparency in all college-wide operations and processes.

2. Allocate budgets, staffing, and resources with an institutional commitment to student learning.

3. Keep tuition, fees, and related costs of higher education affordable for students.

4. Champion innovative approaches to instructional modes and classroom utilization to maximize scheduling efficiency.

5. Identify and obtain new and additional funding sources to support the continued expansion and development of the college.

6. Actively recruit, reward, and retain the best faculty and staff.

7. Improve productivity and efficiency by reviewing the organizational structure and implementing any necessary changes.

8. Increase cost efficiencies through the use of technological tools that enhance student support and student success.

9. Reduce reliance on manual processes and improve cost efficiency through automation of services.

10. Demonstrate excellence in fiscal responsibility and accountability to the public.

ISSUE-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING

South Texas College prides itself on its comprehensive strategic planning process that is:

- issue-based for an inclusive, cross-functional system of goal setting and priority setting,
- broad-based involving all sectors of the college community,
- data-driven with heavy investments in the gathering and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data,
- systematically evaluated at every level of the organization,
- integrated with sound budgeting, and
- periodically updated with each new planning cycle.

ISSUE-BASED

STC is committed to the elimination of operational silos. Efforts to eliminate poor communication and weak collaboration between and among distinct operations at the college have been identified. STC pursues planning, budgeting and assessment by identifying and then addressing issues that affect the institution and its mission foremost, assigning cross-functional action teams or special task forces and committees to produce recommendations for improvement and action. Only then do individual departments and divisions proceed with implementation of the varied components of the plan and with measuring their success at effective implementation and goal achievement.

BROAD-BASED

STC involves faculty and staff throughout the strategic planning process. Planning at STC begins with the convocation of faculty and staff from all levels and sections of the college during which issues, achievements, challenges and future opportunities are identified for determining the broader landscape of the institution and its ever-moving mission.

Faculty and staff dialogue is augmented with focus groups, students, and members of the Board of Trustees in an effort to triangulate current institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (a collective, broad-based SWOT analysis).

Throughout the planning process, faculty and staff participate in validation sessions that sometimes take the form of focus groups and cross-functional action teams.

DATA-DRIVEN

STC invests heavily in the collection, analysis, and presentation of statistical data and qualitative studies for purposes of ensuring that decisions are based on verifiable and reliable data. The college relies on several departments to systematically report out continuously on the results of institutional efforts to improve student success:

- Research and Analytical Services
- Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
- Technology Resources – Data and Reporting Team
- Enrollment Management Office
- Office of Accountability, Grants and Management Services

Separately and cooperatively, these departments provide sound, reliable evidence of institutional excellence, identify potential areas of concern, and routinely respond to special inquiries into institutional performance and achievements.

SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION

South Texas College's institutional effectiveness cycle is biennial in order to align it with the Texas State Legislature's budgeting cycle for Texas. Every two years, within the college's strategic planning cycle, institutional effectiveness plans are written to identify the specific intended outcomes and measures for those actions identified in the strategic planning process. During the fifth year of the five-year strategic plan, a third year is added to the second IE cycle to allow for a new strategic plan to be formulated.

The results of such a biennial cycle of planning and evaluation allow the institution to remain cognizant of fiscal constraints without compromising the pursuit of quality in higher education.

BUDGET INTEGRATION

The biennial STC institutional effectiveness cycles are integrated with annual budgeting based on the specific outcomes outlined by a department or program's IE plan. A complete IE-Budget calendar details the thorough integration of planning and budgeting, culminating in an annual budget that is strongly aligned with the college's comprehensive mission.

PERIODIC UPDATES

The South Texas College Strategic Plan is a five-year plan. During the first two years of the plan, the first institutional effectiveness cycle is underway. The next two years see another IE cycle to completion. During the fifth and final year, the second IE cycle is extended for a third year while careful, broad-based strategic planning takes place once again with the input of faculty, staff, trustees and the student body. The entire fifth year results in the formulation of a new five-year plan, the kick-off of the next IE cycle, and a sound annual budget fully integrated into the planning process.

In all, Strategic Planning at South Texas College has been proven successful by the college's own successes during the past 15 years and in the leadership's commitment to continually improve upon its planning processes with each strategic planning five-year cycle.

ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS

South Texas College has a two decade history of national recognition and rankings. It is embedded in the institutional culture to exceed all expectations in our commitment to serve the needs of all residents of deep South Texas.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 31,000 students per semester on five campuses and a virtual campus;
- Over 112 degree and certificate options, and 20 on-line Associate degrees;
- Over 31,000 degrees and certificates awarded;
- One of three community colleges in the state of Texas authorized to offer the Bachelor of Applied Technology; The only community college offering four BAT degrees;
- Bequeaths and endowments valued at over $6 million;
- Tuition-free dual enrollment to over 67,000 high school students, saving families over $71 million in tuition since 2003;
- 15 Early College High Schools and academies, with 63% of participating students graduating with an Associate's Degree in addition to their high school diploma;
- Partner with local school districts, helping over 3,320 high school dropouts earn a diploma and college credit;
- Corporate Headquarters/Executive Office for the North American Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education Initiative designed to develop the regional workforce to be the national leader in advanced manufacturing;
- Community approval of a taxing district for operation of the College and $118.7 million in construction bonds;
- Construction of 16 state-of-the-art buildings on 5 campuses in 16 months;
- Valley Scholars Program awarding two-year scholarships to top 10% of local high school graduates;
- Phi Theta Kappa, Beta Epsilon Mu Chapter of South Texas College, achieved Five Star Chapter level in 2012; and
- 8th Annual College and Career Readiness Summit

STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS

- American Association of Community Colleges Finalist: 2013 Student Success Excellence Award
- Leah Meyer Austin Institutional Student Success Leadership Award:2013
- Association of Community College Trustees: 2012 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award;
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Star Award for Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy: 2012;
- Institutional Commitment Award for Distance Education from Texas Distance Learning Association for Outstanding Commitment to Excellence and Innovation in 2012;
- National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD): Excellence Award;
- Association of Community College Trustees: 2005 Western Region Equity Award;
- MetLife Foundation: 2008 Community College Excellence Award for promoting educational and economic advancement;
- First round Achieving the Dream College in 2004, ATD Leader College since 2009, and selected as an ATD Texas Peer Coach in 2012;
- Government Finance Officers Association (United States and Canada): Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting since 2003;
- North American Council for Staff Professional and Organizational Development (NCSPOD): Institutional Merit Award;
- National Council for Public Relations and Marketing: *National Pacesetter Award* for the College's Leadership for Creative and Innovative Marketing and Public Relations; and
- 2011 *Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr. Distinguished Leadership in Higher Education Award* from the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)

NATIONAL RANKINGS

- *Community College Week's Top 100 Associate Degree & Certificate Producers, 2012* continues to rank STC in the top 100 out of more than 1,100 community colleges:
  - 3rd in awarding Associate degrees in Education
  - 4th in awarding Associate degrees to Hispanic students
  - 9th in awarding Associate degrees to all minority students
  - 44th in awarding Associate degrees in all disciplines
- *Community College Week* ranked STC in the top 50 in the nation for awarding degrees in the fields of criminal justice and corrections; family and consumer sciences/human sciences; homeland security, law enforcement, firefighting and related protective services; multi/interdisciplinary studies; parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies; and registered nursing;
- *Community College Week* ranked STC as the third fastest growing community college in the nation;
- *Hispanic Outlook's Top 100* list ranked STC third

for enrolling the most Hispanics among the nation's colleges and universities;

- *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*'s 2012 "Top 100 Producers of Minority Degrees" ranked STC as #1 in the nation in awarding associate degrees to Hispanic students in the fields of business/commerce general, education and psychology; and
- #1 in the nation as the most affordable college by the Department of Education, the College Affordability and Transparency Center, July 2011 Rankings.

ACCREDITATIONS

- Level II Accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and authorization to offer the baccalaureate degree
- Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs
- Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education
- Texas Board of Nursing
- Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
- Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (accredits Health Information Technology)
- National Accreditation for Early Child Care and Education Programs
- Texas Department of Aging and Disability (accredits Patient Care Assisting)
- Texas Department of State Health Services (accredits Emergency Medical Technology)
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
- Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC)
- National Association for Developmental Education (NADE)
- National Automotive Technical Education Foundation (NATEF)
- National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS)

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