



Renton Technical College

Five-Year Strategic Plan

2017-2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definition of Terms	3
Institutional Context	4
Mission, Vision, and Values	8
Strategic Goals, Objectives and Example Activities	9
• Goal 1	9
• Goal 2	10
• Goal 3	11
• Goal 4	12
Strategic Planning Steering Committee	14
Board of Trustees and President	15
Our Planning Process	15

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Achievement Gaps: refers to the unequal distribution of educational results and benefits (i.e., completion, retention, course success, labor market outcomes).¹

Disaggregated Data: refers to data being reported separately for different groups of students. Disaggregating data identifies groups of students who may not be performing as well and provides a better understanding of the barriers preventing their success.

Employees: refers to all individuals employed by Renton Technical College.

Equity Gaps: refers to gaps in student achievement, including opportunity gaps and achievement gaps.

Faculty: refers to all employees serving in a faculty position, including full-time, adjunct, tenured, non-tenured, temporary, and non-instructional.

Opportunity Gaps: refers to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (i.e., access to financial aid, available support services).²

Soft Skills: refers to skills often desired by employers. These include: interpersonal communication, problem solving, team collaboration, attention to detail, work ethic, and social skills.

Staff: refers to all employees serving in a staff position, including full-time, part-time, temporary, administrative, exempt, classified, and those represented by a labor union.

Students: refers to all students attending Renton Technical College, including full-time, part-time, apprenticeship, supplemental, Running Start, English language learners, and adult education.

Note: For more information on how Renton Technical College defines certain data elements, refer to the RTC data dictionary at www.rtc.edu/IR-resources.

¹ Glossary of Education Reform

² Glossary of Education Reform

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Renton Technical College (RTC) developed this strategic plan through a comprehensive and inclusive planning effort built on the foundation of past success and designed to serve as a roadmap for meeting the needs of 21st century students and communities. As a state-funded institution, we recognize our responsibility to prioritize the needs of students and the region we serve. As our economy becomes more advanced and globally connected, students and employees must be prepared to live and work in an environment that requires technical and soft-skills competencies. Students and employees must also be culturally responsive and affirm diversity, have the ability to adapt to changes in technology, and pursue lifelong learning.

As we expect our students to be able to adapt to evolving circumstances and work environments, embrace learning, and seek continuous improvement, we must model this as individuals and as an institution. Our collective willingness to learn and adapt is essential to ensuring our success as we proactively move forward in the years ahead.

Our Past

RTC's 76-year history is steeped in our deep commitment to student success, programmatic excellence, and meeting the needs of our community. Founded in December 1941 as a war production school operated by the school district, Renton Vocational-Technical Institute (RVTI) trained local workers, many of them women, with the technical skills to work on the assembly lines in Puget Sound. After World War II, RVTI assisted local industry and returning veterans in the transition to a peacetime economy. In the decades that followed, the College offered worker retraining classes and high-quality industry training programs.

In 1991, the state Legislature amended the Community College Act of 1967 to include the five remaining public vocational technical institutes, shifting jurisdiction from the local school districts to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). These five technical colleges expanded the system's purpose of offering affordable postsecondary education to every resident regardless of background or experience.

Today, RTC offers basic skills education, certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's of applied science degrees in high-demand fields such as information technology, aerospace, health and human services, business, advanced manufacturing, culinary arts, and transportation technology.

Our Present

Driven by our deep commitment to student success and serving a diverse population, RTC meets students where they are in their educational journey and successfully moves them forward to greater opportunity. Our student population is racially and culturally diverse; over 60% are students of color. The median age of an RTC student is 31 years old. Professional-technical programs generate 38% of our enrollment, followed closely by 34% in basic skills, 15% in an apprenticeship or supplemental program, and 13% in academic education and transfer. Our service area touches upon 11 legislative districts and encompasses the Renton, Kent, Auburn, Tahoma, Tukwila, and Enumclaw school districts as well as the central and south portions of the Seattle Public Schools.

Located in the south Puget Sound region of western Washington, the College serves as an economic driver for the region's aerospace, advanced manufacturing, technology, and health care sectors. In 2015, the Aspen Institute recognized Renton Technical College as one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation. In that same year, the Brookings Institute ranked us 13th in the nation for value added in its "Beyond College Rankings" assessment, which provides insight into how well colleges influence actual outcomes of alumni (e.g. salaries) beyond what would be predicted given students' backgrounds. Following the award of a \$10 million U.S. Department of Labor consortium grant known as the Washington Integrated Sector Employment (WISE) Project, Vice President Joe Biden visited the College and endorsed RTC as a leader in workforce education and apprenticeship. The College has participated in Achieving the Dream (ATD) since 2006 and currently serves as a Leader College. RTC is one of six colleges in the nation chosen to participate in ATD's "Engaging Adjunct Faculty Initiative."

Many factors lead to RTC's success and competitive advantage. Our cohort learning model provides students with the depth of training needed to secure often higher than entry-level positions. Small classes and strong student-staff relationships, learning strategies such as Reading Apprenticeship and Universal Design for Learning, contextualized instruction, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), strong financial aid and student support services, and high-touch advising inside and outside the classroom all serve as the foundation for achieving high rates of student completion. Our certificate and degree completion rates far exceed the national average: 63% at RTC compared to 24% nationally at two-year colleges. Additionally, our job placement rate is 85% upon graduation. Whether as part of the Associated Student Government or in their classrooms, RTC students provide leadership on campus and in the broader community. These outcomes, paired with recent national recognition, attest to our ability to prepare students for high-paying careers in high-demand fields.

An important but perhaps not clearly understood context for strategic planning is our status as a "technical" college in the state's system of 34 community and technical colleges. As such, RTC does not have legislative authority to offer an associate of arts transfer degree that many Washington residents seek in the two-year system (40% of

students receiving bachelor's degrees from Washington's public university system started at community and technical colleges). While we statutorily have a narrower range of programs than community colleges, we appeal to students seeking applied and hands-on learning. RTC is also committed to basic skills and apprenticeship education; they are a crucial part of our identity.

A challenge of this program mix is that 50% of our enrollments have state-mandated tuition waivers limiting our revenue production. In the recent past, RTC has been quite successful in securing large federal grants from the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the National Science Foundation to diversify our funding model. We will continue to seek out a range of opportunities to build institutional strength and resilience.

Our Future

With updated emphases, the purpose of the community and technical colleges remains that of being democracy's colleges – to provide the opportunity of an education to all residents, no matter their background or experience, at a cost within their means. Not only does higher education promote a pathway toward economic security, it works to ensure that people have equally meaningful opportunities to shape the future in their communities. As an academic institution, RTC must fulfill the logic of that mission and be welcoming and successful with all students, especially as the demographics of our residents change over time. Rather than ask whether today's students are ready for college, we should ask ourselves if the College is ready for students now and in the future.

RTC provides a vital resource as we look ahead. Multiple studies declare that job growth in Washington State will far exceed the national average. A recent report estimated 740,000 job openings across the state in the next five years due to retirements and growth³. Two-thirds of these positions will require post-secondary education and certification, yet the majority will not require a bachelor's or advanced degree. While there is great need for the education we provide, we have recently experienced a decrease in our professional-technical enrollments as, historically, professional-technical enrollments are counter cyclical to the economy. High employment rates equate to lower enrollments, except in our apprenticeship offerings. Additionally, less than 6% of students from our local school districts attend RTC immediately following graduation. In many sectors of our society, there is a stigma of attending technical college, though there is a strong economic argument to do so. Also, those who would most benefit from the economic advancement of completing a certificate or degree at RTC are the most economically vulnerable and have more difficulties affording the time and resources to attend college. Finding better ways to transition students from basic skills to professional-technical programs is imperative, including exploring new scheduling models, versatile student support services, and

³ Washington Roundtable and The Boston Consulting Group report, "Washington Kids for Washington jobs," Oct. 5, 2016.

financial assistance programs. It is essential that we define what excellent technical education looks like in the 21st century and invest in its delivery.

In order for RTC to be a first choice for education, the College also needs to be an employer of choice. We need to create a welcoming environment for a diverse faculty and staff and maximize employees' strengths and talents. Our employees should find work rewarding, just as we expect students to find their studies. We must continue to seek and support a diverse workforce, which strengthens our institution by providing many perspectives, ideas, and experiences. This increases our ability to develop strategic goals, engage students and peers, communicate effectively, and achieve our mission.

The collection, analysis, and use of data in decision making will be key to all areas of our work when implementing this plan. Likewise, we will need appropriate technology to address 21st century educational needs and efficient work processes. As much as any other point made during our internal and external forums, participants emphasized the need for effective and open communication. Finally, the participation of so many people during this process emphasizes what we know, but sometimes do not act upon. We have a critical mission, and success depends on the collaboration of all.

About the Strategic Plan

RTC's 2017-2022 strategic plan includes four strategic goals designed to fulfill the College's mission. For each goal, strategic objectives have been developed that will guide the expected outcomes we will achieve. These objectives are supported by priority activities that outline the methods and tasks for achieving each objective. To provide accountability and transparency for the plan, annual communication and a comprehensive evaluation plan will outline the overarching performance measures, annual benchmarks, and the successes and challenges in achieving the performance measures and completing priority activities. To improve the integration of planning and budgeting, RTC's resource allocation and accreditation review processes are included in this plan and will ensure a coordinated system of institutional planning and effectiveness.

MISSION

The MISSION articulates the purpose of the college.

Renton Technical College engages a diverse student population through educational opportunities for career readiness and advancement, serving the needs of individuals, the community, businesses, and industry.

VISION

The VISION articulates our aspirations.

Renton Technical College will be a locally, regionally, and nationally recognized leader for improving lives and inspiring lifelong learning.

VALUES

The VALUES reflect our shared beliefs and principles that guide our work.

Community – create an inclusive environment where all are affirmed and welcomed.

Empowerment – promote strength and confidence to embrace challenge, creativity, and intellectual risk.

Equity – nurture an academic and work environment that identifies and addresses systemic and institutional barriers and promotes fairness.

Integrity – foster an ethical environment of trust and honesty.

Learning – pursue excellence through critical thinking, problem solving, and technical expertise.

Respect – value humanity and the diversity of people, perspectives, and ideas.

Stewardship – build a stronger, accountable institution for future generations.

STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

STRATEGIC GOALS – what we intend to achieve during the life of the plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – measurable actions we expect to accomplish.

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES – collaborative tasks carried out by departments and committees; activities that will evolve throughout the life of the plan.

GOAL 1: RTC will be a learning community in which students, faculty, and staff all strive for excellence and growth

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Increase student progress and completion

Priority Activities

- 1.1.1 Significantly increase associate degree completion.
- 1.1.2 Increase student transition from basic studies to professional-technical and transfer programming.
- 1.1.3 Fully implement guided pathways.
- 1.1.4 Expand program offerings for inclusive access and success.
- 1.1.5 Reimagine and design a cohort model for the 21st century.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Provide comprehensive student support services

Priority Activities

- 1.2.1 Invest in mental health counseling and interventions.
- 1.2.2 Partner with childcare facilities and community-based organizations to identify childcare assistance options.
- 1.2.3 Expand learning support resources, transfer advising, and career services.
- 1.2.4 Utilize a student-centered approach in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and technologies.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Foster continuous growth and professional development of faculty and staff

Priority Activities

- 1.3.1 Improve comprehensive employee orientation and onboarding processes, as well as the tenure process.
- 1.3.2 Broaden the array of effective classroom learning practices.
- 1.3.3 Offer ongoing classroom management and customer service training for employees.

1.3.4 Maximize the skills and talents of employees; cultivate subject-matter expertise.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Develop and implement a college-wide learning assessment strategy

Priority Activities

1.4.1 Establish a cross-departmental assessment committee.

1.4.2 Develop a systematic assessment plan aligned to accreditation standards.

1.4.3 Through the utilization of technology, develop an effective system for measuring and tracking learning outcomes assessment.

1.4.4 Provide faculty with the tools needed to effectively assess student learning.

1.4.5 Use the program review process to drive instructional improvement.

GOAL 2: RTC will foster an academic and work environment of equity, inclusion, and collaboration

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Close equity gaps for underrepresented, low-income, and first generation college students

Priority Activities

2.1.1 Engage faculty and staff in discussions about equity and student success.

2.1.2 Develop and infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion in curriculum and instructional practices.

2.1.3 Implement best practice strategies for increasing retention and completion of underrepresented students.

2.1.4 Regularly present and discuss disaggregated data within the current college governance structure.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Attract, hire, and retain diverse faculty and staff

Priority Activities

2.2.1 Strengthen recruitment strategies to ensure a broader range of applicants.

2.2.2 Make ongoing improvements to the hiring process.

2.2.3 Expand employee orientation, onboarding, and mentoring.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Increase cultural competency

Priority Activities

2.3.1 Develop and implement an institutional equity plan.

2.3.2 Create a shared vocabulary around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2.3.3 Provide ongoing education for faculty, staff, and students.

2.3.4 Expand opportunities for ongoing dialogue.

OBJECTIVE 2.4: Improve policies, procedures, and infrastructure to ensure equity among all campus constituencies

Priority Activities

- 2.4.1 Revise policies to close opportunity gaps and remove barriers for students.
- 2.4.2 Evaluate and revise intake and enrollment procedures to ensure equity and access for all students.
- 2.4.3 Evaluate technologies and facilities to ensure accommodation of all campus constituents, within the college's capacity.

GOAL 3: RTC will engage the greater community through intentional partnerships and responsive programming

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Prepare skilled workers and leaders for the businesses and industries that power our regional and global economy

Priority Activities

- 3.1.1 Invest in new program offerings based on labor market demand and student needs.
- 3.1.2 Ensure current programming remains relevant and up-to-date with industry trends.
- 3.1.3 Provide corporate and continuing education courses and programs that increase our responsiveness to the needs of business and industry.
- 3.1.4 Formalize and communicate program advisory committee expectations.
- 3.1.5 Explore partnerships for capital and program development.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Serve as a vibrant hub for the greater community

Priority Activities

- 3.2.1 Host ongoing public service and civic engagement activities.
- 3.2.2 Engage the community through effective communication of college offerings, events, results, and successes.
- 3.2.3 Develop and implement continuing education programming.
- 3.2.4 Improve relationships and engagement with alumni.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Customize outreach and communication strategies for engaging the diverse constituencies we serve

Priority Activities

- 3.3.1 Promote RTC as a college and employer of choice.
- 3.3.2 Strengthen partnerships with area school districts, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, labor organizations, and city and county agencies.
- 3.3.3 Use data to improve outreach efforts in our communities.

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Improve coordination of legislative advocacy at the federal, state, and local level

Priority Activities

- 3.4.1 Develop and implement an annual legislative relations plan.
- 3.4.2 Leverage community partnerships and student stories that support RTC's impact on learning and student success.
- 3.4.3 Communicate the impact of RTC and Washington's community and technical colleges on the state's economy to stakeholders and policymakers.

GOAL 4: RTC will enhance institutional strength and resilience

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Improve the integration of a planning, evaluation, and resource allocation system aligned to accreditation standards

Priority Activities

- 4.1.1 Improve transparency of resource allocation and decision making processes.
- 4.1.2 Actively use data to inform decision making.
- 4.1.3 Provide ongoing faculty and staff training about strategic plan implementation and alignment with unit planning, the facilities master plan, program review, and resource requests.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Increase financial security by maximizing professional-technical programming and through the diversification of funding

Priority Activities

- 4.2.1 Increase the number of tuition generating students.
- 4.2.2 Grow the RTC Foundation's endowment and capacity to award student scholarships, support programs, and fund capital projects.
- 4.2.3 Secure grant and contract funding to further develop the infrastructure and program and support services offerings at RTC.
- 4.2.4 Expand corporate training for area businesses.

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Implement intentional systems improvement

Priority Activities

- 4.3.1 Champion a culture of transparency and accountability.
- 4.3.2 Expand participation in shared governance and inclusive decision making.
- 4.3.3 Align institutional policies to accreditation standards.

OBJECTIVE 4.4: Invest in the College's infrastructure

Priority Activities

- 4.4.1 Create a technological environment that promotes ease of use, including an intranet and student portal.
- 4.4.2 Ensure classroom equipment and technology is relevant and up-to-date.
- 4.4.3 Automate manual processes and increase workflow efficiency.
- 4.4.4 Align priorities of the facilities master plan.

STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

- Mohamed Abdullahi – ASG representative, Computer Science
- Sally Allen – Assistant Director of Human Resources
- Shweta Babel – Adjunct Faculty, Science
- Celva Boon – Academic/Career Counselor
- Marta Burnet – Director of Grant Development
- Michelle Campbell – Executive Director of Institutional Advancement
- Rebecca Chase – Adjunct Faculty, Basic Studies
- Jacque Culver – Technical Support Analyst
- Mark Daniels – Custodial Manager
- Jacob Jackson – Executive Dean, Workforce, Trades & Economic Development
- Heather Knous-Westfall – Director of Institutional Research
- Francisco Martinez – Adjunct Faculty, Machine Technology
- Kevin McCarthy – RTC President
- Alma Meza – Faculty, Basic Studies
- Tyler Page – Board of Trustees
- Jose Perdomo – Bookstore Director
- Jenna Pollock – Associate Dean, Basic Studies
- Jeff Pulliam – Faculty, Construction Management
- Jim Robinson – Faculty, Medical Assistant
- Keyyon Scott – Student Success Specialist
- Joe Spieldenner – ASG representative, Business DTA
- Jessica Supinski – Director of Student Programs and Engagement
- Jay Townsend – Foundation Board of Directors
- Justin Whitaker – ASG representative, Computer Network Technology

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND PRESIDENT

Trustees

- Debra Entenman
- Tyler Page
- Susan Palmer
- Frieda Takamura
- Kirby Unti

President

Kevin McCarthy, Ph.D.

OUR PLANNING PROCESS

Renton Technical College's process for developing this plan was dynamic and inclusive. A 25-member steering committee consisting of faculty, staff, and students as well as foundation board and board of trustees' representation led and coordinated the development of the plan. Multiple internal and external constituent groups were engaged throughout all phases of the process. Constituent groups included: RTC faculty, staff and students, the Foundation Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees, school districts, community and faith-based organizations, city and legislative officials, community members, advisory committee members, businesses, industry partners, non-profit organizations, and local labor unions.

In September 2016, a strategic plan development timeline and communication plan were drafted. The President's Executive Cabinet met in early October to review the timeline and communication plan. At that time, the Cabinet conducted an environmental scan, a STEEP (Social, Technology, Economic, Environmental, Political) analysis, and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. These analyses were used to articulate seven internal and six external constituent questions, which formed the basis of the first phase of the planning process.

Between December and February, 22 internal and three external forums were conducted. Forums were interactive and lasted 90 minutes. The vast majority of employees attended a forum. The Institutional Research Office compiled all forum data and provided the campus community and the strategic planning steering committee with concept maps for analysis and discussion. From November 2016 through June 2017,

the strategic planning steering committee met 14 times to review various reports and concept map data originating from the forums.

Following the distillation of data and the development of overarching themes and objectives, another five interactive, internal forums were held to discuss the overarching themes, objectives, and proposed changes to the college's mission, vision, and values. In May, a first draft of the strategic plan was shared with the campus community and external constituents. Feedback on the first draft was provided via five internal forums and one external forum. In June, the strategic plan was shared with the Board of Trustees for a first read. The final plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees in July 2017 for formal review and approval.