Strategic Plan
2020-2023
Embracing Our Mission
INTRODUCTION

As Southwestern Michigan College faces a new decade and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we consider the landscape of higher education and post-secondary training in Southwestern Michigan. In doing so, it is critical that we employ strategies to ensure the College will continue to fulfill the motto of “Knowledge for All” as we approach six decades of service to our community.

DR. JOE ODENWALD
President

SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of Southwestern Michigan College is to serve our community by providing affordable, local access to high-quality, postsecondary career preparation and college education—including the total college life experience.
In Michigan, high school graduating class sizes are projected to decrease from 123,600 in 2008 to just 84,100 in 2032, which puts significant pressure on the traditional-age student segment.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
CONTINUED

Post-secondary education attainment in Cass County lags neighboring counties and the state as a whole.

Berrien and Cass can improve competitiveness by increasing attainment. Berrien County ranks 18th for attainment in Michigan, while Cass County ranks 48th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Associate Degree or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kalamazoo</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Berrien</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cass</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statewide Average 41.5%

Ellen County Postsecondary Education Glidepath (CONSERVATIVE – 50% of Last 10 Years Growth)

Cass can set a goal to “bend the curve” and improve economic competitiveness.

Conservative Path
Three Potential Goals for Cass County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Credential</th>
<th>Current 2030 Trajectory</th>
<th>“Bend the Curve”</th>
<th>Cass “by 30” Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
Cass can set a goal to “bend the curve” and improve economic competitiveness.

**Three Potential Goals for Cass County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Incremental Degrees/Credentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Cass stays on current attainment glidepath (based on last ~10 years of growth)</td>
<td>~300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Cass must grow to state average circa 2018</td>
<td>~1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Cass must exceed its previous growth and be in the upper half of counties</td>
<td>~3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
Workers with college credentials have much higher potential lifetime earnings than those with just a high school diploma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Wages After 1 Year</th>
<th>Wages After 5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No High School Diploma</td>
<td>$9,100</td>
<td>$14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>$14,700</td>
<td>$23,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>$33,800</td>
<td>$38,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>$33,100</td>
<td>$39,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>$37,100</td>
<td>$51,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's or Higher Degree</td>
<td>$54,500</td>
<td>$69,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: mischools.org

Due to demographic and economic conditions, enrollment at SMC has moved steadily downward since Fall 2011.
Meanwhile, aid from the State of Michigan as a percentage of the budget has fallen significantly over that time, making SMC more reliant on tuition revenue.

![Operational State Aid and Tuition as a % of Total General Fund Revenue 1990 - 2019](image)

Source: SMC Institutional Report Card

Because we believe full-time faculty are important to student success, SMC has a lower student-to-faculty ratio than our peers.

![Student-to-Faculty Ratio](image)

Source: SMC Institutional Report Card

*2019/2020 is preliminary data*
ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS, CORE VALUES, AND COLLECTIVE GOALS

Taking SMC’s mission and core values to heart, the following value statements and strategic goals were developed by a group of representatives from across all college departments over the span of four months. The statements and goals were mapped to eight “essential conditions” for SMC success that had been identified earlier in 2019.

Enrollment Conscious and Growth Culture

Core Value
We believe in “Knowledge for All.” As the only institution of higher education in the district, Southwestern Michigan College has the dual responsibilities of providing postsecondary career preparation for those who are seeking immediate employment and college coursework and degrees for those seeking baccalaureate degrees.

Value Statement
In order to remain financially stable and to provide our college district with robust educational opportunities, SMC engages and welcomes students from all geographic areas. While enrollment growth is the primary responsibility of the admissions and advising teams, every faculty and staff member understands its importance. All employees actively participate in creating an environment that attracts prospective students to our campuses and encourages persistence in achieving their educational goals.

Strategic Goals
1. We will continue with a robust schedule of events aimed at attracting traditional high school graduates both in and out of the college district, while exploring how to attract non-traditional adult students.

2. We will explore new methods of attracting students from beyond our traditional service areas who are more likely to need housing.

Engaged Students

Core Value
We have a commitment to being a learner-centered college, developing students through a total college life experience and providing them with 21st century services.

Value Statement
As a learner-centered college, SMC understands that engaged students are more likely to be successful in their educational pursuits. Thus, the college seeks to listen and better understand how all student segments define successful engagement. The college strives to provide co-curricular, extra-curricular and community-oriented opportunities for students across both campuses to enrich their experience in the manner they prefer.

Strategic Goal
3. We will collect data from our different types of students to understand how much engagement they desire and in what form, then work to provide those opportunities accordingly.
Entrepreneurial Academic Spirit

**Core Value**
High quality is inherent in all that Southwestern Michigan College does.

**Value Statement**
We must embrace flexibility and innovation in all aspects of our programming and be deliberate in our actions related to programs and courses. The quality of the academic experience will come from SMC’s caring faculty and staff.

**Strategic Goals**

4. We will refine the process and data analysis for academic programs, capturing the stages of program ideation from program development to program creation to program assessment.

5. We will develop key student interactions with faculty and staff to ensure a quality academic experience from admission through graduation.

Eager Educational Partners

**Core Value**
“Excellence with a Personal Touch” is a working principle guiding our actions.

**Value Statement**
SMC aspires to be the best bridge between our high school partners and four-year institutions/employers. To achieve that, SMC intentionally develops partnerships where the student is always the focus. SMC will be data-driven with all decisions that affect these partnerships. By building a culture that values the data behind these decisions, all employees can promote and advise to the college’s strength.

**Strategic Goals**

6. We will prioritize in-house training for data awareness, retrieval, and usage for all employees so that data-driven decision making is inherent in what we do, yet remaining flexible to provide service with a personal touch to our students.

7. We will create a process to evaluate our partnerships (both existing and future) so that we can continually assess and react appropriately to them in the future.

Excellent Facilities and Infrastructure

**Core Value**
We have a commitment to be responsible managers of college resources: human resources by promoting growth, satisfaction, and empowerment; financial resources by operating with a balanced budget and investing in the future; physical resources by maintaining a high-quality physical plant.

**Value Statement**
We value facilities and infrastructure that lead to student success. Facilities need to be safe, accessible, and productive. These spaces will attract and retain students and employees while engaging community members.

**Strategic Goals**

8. We will create and implement a process that provides facilities with the equipment and technology needed to foster student success.

9. We will continuously assess and improve the quality of living, learning, and recreational spaces for students to foster the development of the whole person.
ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS, CORE VALUES, AND COLLECTIVE GOALS CONTINUED

Established Assessment Process

Core Value
High quality is inherent in all that Southwestern Michigan College does.

Value Statement
We value a campus-wide culture of continuous quality improvement that takes action on its outcomes. Our culture is consistently rooted in assessment and the timely review of accurate data, both quantitative and qualitative, for the attraction, retention, and/or success of students.

Strategic Goals
10. We will evaluate the institutional report card to determine its effectiveness.
11. We will develop and implement a department-led campus master plan of improvement focused on the assessment of academic programs, campus departments, and divisions.

Exceptional Faculty and Staff

Core Value
We have a commitment to be responsible managers of college resources: human resources by promoting growth, satisfaction, and empowerment; financial resources by operating with a balanced budget and investing in the future; physical resources by maintaining a high quality physical plant.

Value Statement
We will continue to value our diverse exceptional faculty and staff by creating a culture of open communication, celebrating the success of groups and individuals, and being committed to attracting and developing quality faculty and staff.

Strategic Goals
12. We will develop a robust plan to enhance internal communication and culture among staff, faculty, and administration that delivers information in a timely and concise manner, and improves culture by appreciating individuals and recognizing accomplishments.
13. We will promote the development of our current employees by building a networked workforce to promote student success across campus.

Efficient Use of Technology

Core Value
We have a commitment to being a learner-centered college, developing students through a total college-life experience and providing them with 21st century services.

Value Statement
We will continue to progress SMC into the 21st century through the efficient use of technology with the goals of improved internal and external digital resources, better data-driven decision-making capabilities, and the ability to improve customer engagement and experiences.

Strategic Goal
14. We will encourage innovative solutions from all sources to promote student success.
BROAD INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. The College endeavors to enroll a total of 2,500 students by the fall of 2025. This is an aggressive goal in light of the sharp demographic headwinds, yet a realistic one when considering that just over 50% of the College district’s June high school graduates are enrolled in college in the fall after their graduation. Simultaneously, this goal supports the educational attainment progress that must be made by 2030 to support a changing economy.

2. The College, by way of scheduled debt payments, increasing enrollment, and a commitment to a legacy of fiscal discipline, will improve its already solid financial position.

3. As an institution committed to “Knowledge for All,” the College will demonstrate successful outcomes (graduation rates, job placement, and transfer success) for all categories of students. This includes high school students taking courses through various early college pathways, traditional June graduates, transfer students, and adult learners, taking courses through face to face, online, and hybrid learning modalities.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Each department, whether academic or administrative, will annually execute plans to support the strategic plan. The success of the unit plans will be evaluated regularly to ensure progress is being made to accomplish the fourteen goals of the strategic plan.

2. The administration will use these unit plans to make budgetary decisions, including personnel decisions.
SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As a Michigan public community college, Southwestern Michigan College operates under the supervision of a locally elected board of trustees. The seven board members serve six-year terms and represent a broad range of backgrounds and geographic locations within the college’s service area. Members of the board serve their constituents without compensation.

Thomas F. Jerdon  
Chairman

Keith H. McKenzie  
Vice Chairman

William M. White  
Secretary

Becky L. Moore  
Treasurer

Beth J. Cripe  
Trustee

Dr. Elaine Foster  
Trustee

Tracy D. Hertsel  
Trustee

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION
Southwestern Michigan College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. For inquiries regarding Title IX, contact the Director of Security and Conduct (student-related), Briegel Building, Room 2104, 58900 Cherry Grove Road, Dowagiac, MI 49047 | 269.782.1321 | lparrish@swmich.edu, or the Director of Human Resources (employment-related), Briegel Building, Room 2106, 58900 Cherry Grove Road, Dowagiac, MI 49047 | 269.782.1276 | hhess@swmich.edu. For inquiries related to the Equal Opportunity Policy and/or Title VI, Section 504 or the ADA please contact the Chief of Staff, Briegel Building, Room 2104, 58900 Cherry Grove Road, Dowagiac, MI 49047 | 269.782.1276 | bbrewer01@swmich.edu.

TTY: Individuals who are hearing impaired, hard of hearing or speech impaired can communicate with Southwestern Michigan College by calling the Michigan Relay Center at 1.850.649.3777.

Southwestern Michigan College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org), a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.