

Strategic Plan



FORT LEWIS COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN Adopted 2/1/19

PREAMBLE

Fort Lewis College is unique among public institutions. Influenced by its history as an Indian boarding school and deeply rooted in its southwestern location in the Four Corners, FLC's commitment to access, affordability, academic excellence, and equitable opportunities for its diverse student body has been integral to its DNA since its founding more than a century ago. FLC leverages the cultural and natural abundance of its region through a focus on experiential learning guided by high quality faculty via rigorous degree options.

FLC creates a sense of belonging for all our students and ensures that they develop the ability to critically understand the world around them, clearly express themselves, and effectively work in teams. To actualize this commitment to our students, we will:

- Develop and support students as whole people through a culture of caring and personalization;
- Provide authentic and graduate-quality research opportunities for undergraduates;
- Embed experiential learning practices throughout our curriculum;
- Respond to our community's needs;
- Work toward reconciling our complicated past;
- Provide experiences for students to build resilience and adaptability;
- Leverage the curricular and co-curricular assets of our location; and
- Pursue interdisciplinary approaches to address the major scientific and social issues of the future.

FLC faculty and staff work every day to make the world around them a better place through scholarship, teaching, and service. True to our institution's liberal arts roots, they create learning opportunities that prepare students to flourish in an uncertain world through developing essential skills for the future and an entrepreneurial spirit. The challenges and opportunities facing the Four Corners reflect critical issues facing contemporary society, and as such, serve as a unique learning environment. Therefore, at FLC, we consider how to:

- Reduce disparities in health, wellness, education, and economic outcomes by considering the moral, historical, and ethical aspects of these issues;
- Foster students' ability to take action to confront scientific, social, and environmental

- challenges by complementing critical thinking with development of current and transferable technical know-how and communications skills; and
- Connect caring with resilience, a sense of belonging with understanding, and critical thinking with tangible impact through all our teaching, research and co-curricular activities.

At its September 2018 meeting, the FLC Board of Trustees endorsed several high-level priorities to guide the College's strategic planning process¹ prioritizing *putting students at the center of our campus community's work*. The work of the strategic planning team was motivated by the fundamental premise of "students at the center."

Another critical priority endorsed by the Board is to achieve financial sustainability. That priority is reflected throughout the strategic plan, through goals to increase enrollment, diversify the College's revenue generating activities, including expanding online offerings and strengthen data-informed decision making for allocating scarce resources. Additionally, the Board signaled the value of our student diversity and this plan embraces our role as a non-tribal Native American Serving institution.

The strategic plan that follows is organized into key areas of emphasis that emerged from wide-ranging discussions with the FLC community and the greater region. These areas of emphasis will serve as touchstones to guide the College's decision making at both the leadership level and in the day-to-day work of faculty and staff. They include:

- Students at the Center;
- Knowledge as Action; and
- Community and Regional Relationships.

A fourth area of emphasis, which will permeate and support all of the College's strategic planning efforts, is:

- Systems to Facilitate Success.

Primary objectives and key results are presented within each of these four strategic areas of emphasis, along with initiatives designed to achieve them. Key results are largely dependent on improvement from baseline data; likewise, so that efficacy and progress can be measured, many initiatives will begin by establishing baseline data where needed (e.g., alumni job placements, regional labor market needs, etc.). Similarly, the development of certain systems will require identifying best practices from both within and outside the College. Specific key results will then flow from baseline data.

This strategic plan presents a positive call to action to the entire FLC community and marks the beginning of an exciting time for the College. Over the next few years, FLC will strive to reach its full potential as a national example of serving students, the community, and the nation, with an unyielding commitment to access and academic excellence.

¹ The strategic direction document outlining the priorities approved by the Board in Sept. 2018 is attached.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF EMPHASIS

Students at the Center

Improve all aspects of the Fort Lewis College student experience, from prospective students' first interaction with FLC until graduates are established in their next phase of life. Create engaging, supportive, and inclusive structures across all aspects of the College that are vital to meeting the needs of our students.

Objective: Use high impact curricular and co-curricular practices to improve student success and retention.

Key Results:

1. Increase first-year to sophomore retention rate to 75% within 5 years; and continue improvement to a long-term goal of 90%.
2. Increase sophomore-to-junior persistence to 80% and junior-to-senior persistence to 90% within 5 years, resulting in 6-year graduation rates that approach 55%.
3. Close gaps in retention, persistence, and graduation rates among all student demographics to within 5 percentage points within 5 years, utilizing Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) categories.
4. Identify ten relevant metrics of the National Collegiate Health Assessment (NCHA) data and close the gap between FLC and national averages by 30% within three years; continue to shrink gaps thereafter.
5. Increase fundraising by 25% over three years for merit, need, and microgrants program.

Objective: Serve our students through innovative and best recruitment, communication, and admission practices.

Key Results:

1. Increase growth in overall enrollment by 5% each of the next three years to reach at least 3,700 students.
2. Increase growth in transfer students by 12% over three years.
3. Improve the campus visit yield rate to 40% of students who visit the year prior to enrollment, and to 30% of those who ever visit campus.

Initiatives

Reimagine the first-year experience

Construct a comprehensive program of first-year experiences, both curricular and co-curricular, that fully integrates students into college life, a love for learning, and appreciation for the Fort Lewis College approach to interdisciplinary exploration. The new first-year program shall integrate holistic personal development, intentional introduction to support resources, professionalism, and cross-cultural education into programs targeting first-year students, such as 100-level curriculum that addresses contemporary real-world problems requiring interdisciplinary solutions, orientation, and other campus activities.

Improve campus-wide approach to student health, wellness, resilience, and healing

Implement a holistic and culturally-inclusive approach to fostering health, wellness, resilience and healing among all our students. Students shall be served through not only a health and wellness student service hub (Counseling Services, Student Life Center, Health Center, Athletics, Recreation Services, and Wellness Programs), but also through improved faculty and staff training, protocols, staff and resource allocation, community partnerships, and interdepartmental efforts that provide a wrap-around approach to their overall well-being.

Improve campus-wide approach to inclusion, equity, and diversity

Ensure that accountability and responsibility for inclusion, equity, and promoting a sense of belonging for all students permeates all work done by FLC faculty and staff. Students will be served in both curricular and co-curricular settings. Examples include adoption of pedagogical practices designed for equity, and the establishment of a FLC Mosaic Center, a student space for diversity and inclusion. This initiative entails reviewing all hiring, onboarding, and development practices for faculty and staff, as well as tenure and promotion criteria, and the modification of all practices and criteria as appropriate. Actively seeking the perspectives of our students and alumni will ensure that this work is grounded in the lived experience of those we are dedicated to serve.

Centralize student services

Create readily identifiable information and service hubs so that students can easily seek and receive support. Potential hubs include an administrative one-stop-shop around the business of being a student (e.g., records, billing, financial aid, advising, etc.); an academic support hub (e.g., tutoring, drop-in math, writing center, research assistance, student success coaching, etc.); and a health and wellness hub (e.g., health, counseling, wellness, recreational services, etc.). Ensure that student service functions learn from each other (e.g., by tapping the success of TRIO programs) and that all programs use best-class practices (e.g, advising students via a success coaching model) and make data-driven resource allocation decisions.

Support and sharpen recruitment processes

Ensure that general marketing, target market outreach, prospective student communications, application review, acceptance process, campus visits, and student onboarding incorporate the spectrum of college admissions best practices. Focused strategies include intentional outreach and improved service to pipeline community colleges; and enhanced recruitment efforts on Colorado's Front Range, out-of-state markets identified as current strengths, and new locations identified for growth (including global markets).

Knowledge as Action

Promote, support, and inspire students to action through learning environments that foster interdisciplinary studies and produce graduates equipped to grapple with contemporary global and regional issues.

Objective: Support students' abilities to deeply engage with the most critical scientific and social issues of the future by investing in and leveraging FLC's academic strengths. Do so in

concert with holistic practices to develop the whole student and foster effective communication skills that flow from FLC's roots in the liberal arts.

Key Results:

1. Increase student experiential learning opportunities by 50% by Spring 2020.
2. Increase student participation in interdisciplinary capstone projects/senior seminar classes that include two or more departments by 50% by Fall 2021.
3. Ensure that all graduating seniors have participated in an experiential, high-impact curricular/co-curricular learning experience by Spring 2022.
4. Increase dollar value of grant/gift awards that support undergraduate research, experiential learning, and faculty service/research by 20% annually by 2020-21 academic year.

Objective: Improve the quality and relevance of FLC academic offerings by deepening connections to post-graduate and professional programs and labor market needs.

Key Result:

1. Increase the number of graduates employed in their field of study or enrolled in a high-quality post-graduate or professional program.

Initiatives:

Create and enhance programs for mentorship, professionalism, and career attachment

Create mechanisms for students to develop professional skills and work experiences relevant to their interests and degree program. Build on momentum of the reimagined first-year experience so that students are practicing professionalism by the start of sophomore year. Create intentional structures (curricular and co-curricular) where students develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills, learn to self-advocate, improve time management, work collaboratively, etc.

Identify interdisciplinary study and research opportunities

Create mechanisms to create and support interdisciplinary opportunities through a collaborative process led by Academic Affairs and the faculty (e.g., highlight interdisciplinary connections of LAC; cross-listing of courses). In addition, build capacity to develop and coordinate the widest array of high-quality experiential education opportunities for students.

Community and Regional Partnerships

Build programs and initiatives that respond to and support regional labor market demands. Create additional internship and experiential learning opportunities for students and maximize the impact of FLC.

Objective: Expand and leverage resources that enhance the College's impact in the community through economic and workforce development.

Key Results:

1. Develop sustainable academic program offerings that reflect alumni employment trends and meet current community and regional workforce needs (e.g., allied health programs, principal preparation).
2. Increase enrollment in certificate programs by 80% by 2020.
3. Develop MOU's with three remote employers during the 2019-20 academic year.
4. Increase employer satisfaction with FLC graduates.

Objective: Create new pathways and partnerships for educational enrichment and/or employment that meet market needs in the Four Corners region.

Key Results:

1. Increase the number of internships offered across campus by all academic programs.
2. Increase the number of FLC partnerships with businesses and organizations in the for-profit and non-profit sectors.
3. Increase job placement of graduates via partnerships by 20%.
4. Establish new graduate programs that match labor market/student needs.
5. Enhance entry to career paths, increase professional accreditation and licensure programs by 20%.
6. Develop new (or converted) hybrid or completely online certificates or programs that match community needs.
7. Increase online course offerings annually.

Objective: Better connect faculty and staff expertise to community needs to foster regional economic and community development.

Key Results:

1. Increase faculty-based community/scientific/economic partnerships by 30%.
2. Increase rates of college readiness in local schools until at least 90% of students are college ready.
3. Create a Native American Advisory Board comprised of Tribal leaders and alumni.

Initiatives:

Establish a Community Engagement Center

Create a Community Engagement Center (CEC) that conducts ongoing environmental scans of community needs and applies that data to coordinate experiential opportunities for students, help establish relevant academic programs in response to those needs, and develop alternative revenue generating activities. The CEC also facilitates partnerships and initiatives that address community needs such as continuing education, high value certificates, and K-12 outreach (in close collaboration with local school districts). The CEC works closely with FLC's Career Services to improve graduates' job placements with partners.

Begin development of new regionally-focused academic programs

Based on CEC analyses, develop new undergraduate and graduate programs based on regional need through new majors, certificates, and partnerships with key regional businesses and organizations. Initial analysis points toward development of health and

allied health related programs, early childhood programs, and select graduate programs. Hybrid and online programs would be developed as necessary.

Begin development of MOUs with remote employers

In collaboration with La Plata Economic Alliance and other regional partners, develop employment pathways with remote employers whose needs match FLC strengths.

Systems to Facilitate Success

Design systems to implement and assess progress and impact of strategic initiatives. Use data and results to drive decision making about how best to allocate and leverage human, financial, and physical resources.

Objective: Evaluate, assess, and improve upon current practices and new initiatives as outlined in this strategic plan.

Key Results:

1. Acquire and analyze baseline data in all target areas and agree upon processes for gathering data on an ongoing basis to evaluate and improve existing and new initiatives.
2. Improved capacity to better understand student success.

Objective: Facilitate and improve communication across campus and throughout the community.

Key Results:

1. Coordinate and reduce unnecessary/redundant communications to students.
2. Improve mechanisms to identify, share, and disseminate both internal and external best practices across campus (faculty and staff) by Spring 2019.
3. Support employee development by reducing conflicting and out-of-date policies contained in the College's Policy Library and various handbooks by January 2020.

Objective: Develop, support, and reward faculty and staff through improving our Human Resources function.

Key Results:

1. Enhance employee training so that 90% of new employees report an understanding of institutional and job specific expectations by Fall 2019.
2. Improve employee satisfaction so that 70% of current employees find value in, and are satisfied with, recurring training and other opportunities for growth and advancement by Fall 2019.
3. Implement managerial training so that 75% of employees report having an effective manager by Fall 2019.
4. Enhance faculty training so that new faculty members indicate an 80% level of satisfaction with teaching and learning support by Spring 2020.
5. Acquire baseline data on equity, diversity, and inclusive climate by Spring 2019, then work to improve campus climate based upon this data.

Initiatives:

Build an evaluation dashboard (collecting and using data) into all initiatives

Achieving the goals set by the College will entail learning from both successes and failures, as well as modifying practices to better serve students. Thus, the College will need to develop systems to evaluate the efficacy of both new initiatives and existing practices and create feedback mechanisms to improve.

Create systems to streamline communications to students

The sharing of information and knowledge across campus and throughout the community is inconsistent and often overwhelming. New systems to enhance communications will address minimizing emails, reducing redundancy, and centralizing control of the dissemination of information.

Build capacity to better understand the quality of FLC's academic programs and improve tracking of students

Academic and Student Affairs will work together to better track outcomes for both graduates and non-graduates and will use the data results and to build programs that support student success and post-graduate opportunities.

Develop systems to leverage knowledge across campus

These systems will mine and share best practices, as well as teaching and research expertise, to improve faculty and staff development. Best practices will be identified and implemented in academic and administrative units/functions, and will include assessment, discipline-specific career advising, customer service, institutional and departmental on-boarding, etc.

Review communication processes to eliminate redundancy and better align current policies

Develop communication systems across campus committees to ensure that they are not duplicating one another's efforts. Conduct reviews of College handbooks and policies and revise as needed to ensure alignment.

Provide consistent training to all faculty and staff

To ensure success in achieving the College's strategic goals, employees will receive training in both campus-wide expectations and job-specific responsibilities. Training systems should begin with the on-boarding of new employees and continue throughout their careers. Emphasis will be paid to building the cultural competence of faculty and staff.

Develop evaluation and compensation systems that align with the College's goals

The compensation system will include both monetary and non-monetary rewards, as well as ensure that evaluation criteria for faculty and staff performance is aligned with institutional student success goals.

A CULTURAL SHIFT

Our strategic plan is a living document designed to propel Fort Lewis College toward achieving its full potential. The strategic planning process demonstrated that FLC faculty, staff, and students have both the inspirational ideas and concrete plans needed to drive FLC forward. Focused on improving our financial sustainability while rising to the call of serving our students and community, this plan motivates a cultural shift in our day-to-day work, and will guide our decision making and budget priorities going forward. The plan builds upon FLC's rich history while charting a robust future focused on achieving the strategic priorities set forth by the Board of Trustees.