



2015 - 2020 Academic Strategic Plan

Opportunity



Enrichment



Impact



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Planning Process	1
OUR MISSION.....	2
OUR CORE THEMES	2
STRATEGIC GOALS	2
Opportunity	3-4
Enrichment	5-6
Impact	7-8
ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING	8

INTRODUCTION

As the first and only State College in the Nevada System of Higher Education, Nevada State College is a historic endeavor, the foundation of a legacy that will serve Nevada for many successive generations. Although we have provided students with remarkable opportunities for over a decade, we are still at the very beginning of a vast frontier. This document outlines the principles, opportunities, and initiatives that will guide our next steps. By placing a special emphasis on the advancement of a diverse and largely under-served student population, NSC is uniquely positioned to improve our state's economic and civic prosperity by bringing educational opportunities to those who historically have been unable to pursue a baccalaureate degree. The commitment of the entire campus community to fulfilling this promise and becoming a national model for closing equity gaps in student performance is a cornerstone of the 2015-2020 academic strategic plan.

Planning Process

The academic strategic plan represents the culmination of a comprehensive and collaborative effort among college employees, students, and stakeholders. In developing this plan, the Academic Strategic Planning Committee began from the foundation established by our previous (2010-2015) Academic Strategic Plan and our Year 1 Accreditation Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to ensure that our strategic goals incorporated and supported our mission, core themes, and objectives.

The committee and the campus academic leadership team began this process by soliciting ideas from the campus community and identifying areas in which we should expand our capacity and strengthen the focus of high-demand programs as well as those emerging fields that show great promise. For each new program, the committee gathered relevant data (including employment outlook information, student enrollment data, and student surveys) and carefully evaluated each program's potential for success in accordance with our mission. The committee then cultivated a consensus among executive leadership, academic and administrative faculty, student leadership, alumni, local business and community leaders, and the College's foundation board. The resulting academic strategic plan

reflects the existing strengths and core values that have guided the College to its formative accomplishments, and it conveys the goals and aspirations that will drive our future successes.

Importantly, the strategic plan is not a comprehensive or chronological list of initiatives. Instead, it presents a focused, evidenced-based, and concise outline of the goals, core themes, and principles that will guide us in the decision-making process as the College grows.



OUR MISSION

At Nevada State College, excellence fosters opportunity. Excellence in teaching leads to innovative, technology-rich learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Quality, affordable four-year degree programs open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life for a diverse population of students. Our graduates, in turn, foster the greatest opportunity – the promise of a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada.

OUR CORE THEMES

1	Foster educational opportunity
2	Promote student success
3	Strengthen the community

STRATEGIC GOALS

The core themes of the College, and the plan that advances them, are anchored by a pervasive and singularly important goal: to nurture the success of our unique student population. The achievement of this goal begins with *opportunity* – the supportive services and inclusive practices that open doors to a diverse and largely under-served student population. This opportunity, in turn, carves an essential path to educational *enrichment* – the personal and professional growth wrought by learning experiences that challenge and inspire students to achieve their potential. Importantly, this investment in our students culminates with a far-reaching *impact*, as our alumni realize post-graduate success, enjoy an improved quality of life, and act as catalysts for social, civic and economic progress in the community.

Over-arching Principles

Five over-arching principles unify our efforts to provide opportunities, foster enrichment, and exert a meaningful impact on the lives of our students and the communities they ultimately serve:

- An effort to empower students with a strong sense of self-efficacy and the resilient belief that NSC is the ideal place to meet their highest aspirations;
- The cultivation of an inclusive culture with a foundational belief that collaborative, multicultural, and interdisciplinary approaches lead to enhanced solutions and success;
- A reliance on assessment and evidence to drive institutional improvement and innovation;
- The intelligent integration of technology to enhance quality, maximize efficiency, and free people to invest their time and effort into activities that benefit uniquely from human involvement;
- The development of innovative partnerships between academic and student affairs that provide students with the integrated, structured support needed to achieve their goals and meet our expectations.

Opportunity



Nevada State College serves as a vital partner in improving the economic mobility of the citizens of Nevada by enrolling an ever-expanding pool of academically talented, engaged, and diverse students. Towards that end, the institution will firmly establish the infrastructure, services, and practices that yield a well-coordinated, central focus on providing a high-quality student experience.

Opportunity - The supportive services and inclusive practices that open doors to a diverse and largely under-served student population.

Initiatives

Maintain Affordability and Administrative Efficiency

- Pursue limited, incremental tuition growth while orchestrating marginal increases – or even decreases – in non-tuition expenses
- Significantly expand need-based financial aid
- Develop highly integrated and efficient administrative structures that leverage data and technology to make informed decisions and keep institutional costs low
- Develop innovative, cost-effective ways of delivering educational programs

Encourage Timely Degree Progression

- Financially incentivize timely degree progression and full-time status
- Eliminate institutional barriers and facilitate students' progress towards degree completion (e.g., develop two-year schedules of courses, expand year-round and accelerated course offerings)

Incorporate Structured Guidance to Improve Student Decision-Making & Degree Progression

- Establish campus policies and procedures that will maximize the likelihood of student success
- Integrate tools that provide real-time success-oriented feedback to faculty and students (e.g., predictive analytics)

Evaluate and enhance freshman orientation

- Implement block scheduling for 1st- and 2nd-year students
- Direct students along ideal degree-completion pathways with prescribed curricular sequences and automated scheduling guidance
- Expand virtual and on-demand academic assistance opportunities

Improve Transfer Models

- Forge stronger partnerships with transfer stakeholders and decision-makers at the community colleges
- Expand use of dual and concurrent enrollment with the community colleges
- Expand BAS programs with the community colleges and expand our statewide mission
- Expand advising outreach to community college students wishing to transfer
- Develop robust policy for prior learning assessment



Opportunity

Improve Assessment & Treatment of Student Preparedness

- Redesign placement procedures – including preparedness for online instruction and technology utilization – through enhanced predictive models and the examination of alternative methods
- Develop co-remediation model for mathematics that integrates as-needed remediation with college-level courses
- Develop college writing center and expand “writing across the curriculum” efforts
- Implement proactive outreach advising
- Expand student participation in intensive summer preparatory programs that foster learning communities, intensive mentorship and interaction with faculty, and utilization of student support personnel

Expand and Integrate Academic Support

- Improve collaborative efforts involving learning support services and teaching faculty (e.g., in-class tutors, course assistants, technology support)
- Expand the use of supplemental instruction and structured learning assistance
- Improve the integration of library services and information literacy initiatives into the curriculum
- Capitalize on the value of peer support (e.g., a peer mentorship program; in-class course assistants)

Implement Improvements to Support Services Based on More Robust Assessments of Student Satisfaction

- Establish on-the-spot assessment of student satisfaction of experiences with academic assistance personnel
- Develop mechanisms that allow advisors to provide feedback collected from students to department chairs, deans, admissions & records, and other important stakeholders



Enrichment



A distinctive and exceptional learning experience is a cornerstone of NSC's institutional mission. Ideally, this experience will increase student motivation to excel; impart meaningful knowledge, values, and skills; and inspire superb – and perhaps otherwise unreachable – levels of student achievement. The realization of these goals begins with a revamped first-year experience, extends as a consistent and palpable thread of academic excellence that unifies our degree programs, and culminates with meaningful opportunities for students to demonstrate their personal and professional growth.

Enrichment - The personal and professional growth wrought by learning experiences that challenge and inspire students to achieve their potential.

Initiatives

Foster Intellectual, Professional, and Personal Growth

- Impart adaptive knowledge, values, and skills that facilitate the ability to engage in critical inquiry, solve challenging problems, communicate persuasively, and contribute to the community in a meaningful way
- Structure courses and curricula to imbue students with functional and marketable skills that promote opportunities for career, graduate school, and personal success
- Provide students with meaningful mentorship from dedicated faculty who will assist them in achieving their educational goals and becoming leaders in their local communities
- Improve the quality and consistency of instruction in courses and degrees by enhancing instructor development and resources, strengthening assessment methods, and standardizing learning outcomes
- Significantly expand co-curricular opportunities on campus, including those in arts, culture, and literature, to complement our academic programs and initiatives

Inspire Meaningful Accomplishments

- Foster the development of highly interdisciplinary, technology-rich curricula that promote the examination of complex issues from multiple perspectives and encourage collaborative approaches to problem solving
- Promote the application of course knowledge, values, and skills, particularly toward the resolution of complex and relevant problems and questions
- Develop learning experiences that have real-world significance
- Establish relationships that allow students to engage with the community and develop fresh solutions to practical problems

Engender a Culture of Empowerment and Inclusion

- Establish learning communities that forge stronger student relationships and success-seeking behaviors
- Bolster interactions between incoming students and successful, experienced students and alumni



Enrichment

- Infuse the curriculum and the campus culture with activities that reinforce NSC's commitment to diversity in a meaningful way
- Create an educational experience that resonates with the life concerns of students, affords an opportunity to enact change, and reflects principles of equity and inclusion
- Share the history, mission, and vision of the College in an effort to bolster pride in the institution



Impact



Ultimately, the coupling of *opportunity* and *enrichment* should exert a powerful and positive impact, beginning with our graduates but extending to their families, colleagues, and fellow citizens. The nature and magnitude of this impact will be enhanced by strategic efforts to increase graduation rates, improve career prospects, and advance strong values of citizenship and community purpose.

Impact - Our alumni realize post-graduate success, enjoy an improved quality of life, and act as catalysts for social, civic and economic progress in the community.

Initiatives

Enhance Career Success & Development

- Increase student exposure to career paths through speaker series, expanded activities of the Career Services Center, and through introductory-level curricula
- Provide faculty development opportunities for the creation of course assignments with career relevance and an emphasis on civic engagement
- Increase access to undergraduate research opportunities, capstone experiences, and co-curricular activities that allow students to synthesize their knowledge and skills and demonstrate mastery of student learning outcomes
- Provide enhanced pathways for students to enter graduate study at UNLV and UNR, with particular emphasis on underrepresented student populations

Provide Southern Nevada with Critically-thinking, Engaged Students and Graduates

- Expand internship and externship opportunities coordinated with select programs
- Utilize Career Services Center for seniors and alumni to place NSC graduates in employment
- Align program development with the broader economic diversification efforts of the state and data on local employment trends

Connect NSC with the Community

- Increase “outbound” community partnerships that take our students off campus and into the community at large
- Establish field courses, internships, and project-based courses that focus on community issues and facilitate meaningful interaction and engagement with community organizations and families.
- Increase student opportunities to engage in volunteer work and other civic partnerships with the community Strengthen relationships with alumni by actively engaging them in campus activities and community events
- Increase “inbound” community partnerships that bring the community to campus
- Expand opportunities for community members to share their knowledge and experience with students, including contributions as guest speakers, Executives in Residence, and evaluators of undergraduate research
- Host cultural events such as art exhibits, visiting speakers, and performances



ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Beginning from a commitment to our mission and core values, and guided by data on career prospects, educational market saturation, and student interest, NSC has prioritized the introduction of the following new academic programs and initiatives over the next five years. A commitment to the robust quality and health of existing programs, in accordance with projected resources, strongly influenced the selection of new programs and initiatives.

Academic Degrees

- Allied Health - BAS
- Chemistry - BS
- Communication Studies - BA
- Deaf Studies - BA
- Mathematics - BS
- Visual Media - BAS
- Speech Pathology - MA - collaborative partnership with an accredited graduate program

Minors and Concentrations

- Art
- Data Science
- New areas of specialization in business (e.g., entrepreneurship, human resources)
- New areas of specialization in nursing (e.g., lactation consultant, nursing informatics)

Special Initiatives

- Secondary Education – pursuit of the UTeach model and increased enrollment
- Teaching English as a Second Language – expand the endorsement program
- Nursing – significant expansion of all three BSN programs
- Honors program

