
Northwest College Strategic Plan 2030



Approved by the NWC Board of Trustees on November 14, 2022

Pillars, Strategies and Tactics

The Strategic Plan is made up of four pillars that define how the College will fulfill its Vision. The pillars were identified out of work completed in 2019 and 2020-2021 as part of Vision 2025 and the transformational work. The pillars clearly define focus areas, with all pillars retaining equal importance for success.

See strategies and tactics for each pillar in the following pages:

- 1. Innovate Academic Programming** 3-4
- 2. Attract New Students and Quality Employees** 5-6
- 3. Champion Student and Employee Retention and Success** 7-8
- 4. Revitalize Campus** 9-10



Appendices

- Appendix I: Why a Strategic Plan 11
- Appendix II: Our Mission 12-13
- Appendix III: Perspective 14
- Appendix IV: The Process 15-16
- Appendix V: The Structure 17
- Appendix VI: Visualization of the Structure 18
- Appendix VII: The Vision 19
- Conclusion 19

Pillar 1: Innovate Academic Programming

Strategy 1	Identify and implement academic programs that support economic development and workforce needs at state, regional, and local levels.
Tactic 1	Monitor job trends for the nation, state, and region. Monitor state priorities for economic and workforce development.
Tactic 2	Identify needed workforce training, CTE, and academic programs by collaborating with high Schools, Skills USA, the State, Universities, and industry.
Tactic 3	Implement selected workforce training, CTE, and academic programs through partnerships with industry, other CC's, the University, State, and local agencies.
Tactic 4	Participate in programs and seek grant opportunities for programmatic expansion that is sustainable and supports economic development and workforce needs. (<i>Wyoming Works, Wyoming's Tomorrow</i>)
Tactic 5	Move workforce training from non-credit to credit programming as viable.
Strategy 2	Expand BAS offerings or pathways as feasible.
Tactic 1	Expand the existing BAS program to offer additional pathways. (<i>healthcare administration, criminal justice administration, investigative analytics, conservation law</i>)
Tactic 2	Partner with other colleges to advocate for a rule change regarding the number of BAS programs.
Tactic 3	Place all BAS classes on WYCLASS to expand enrollment opportunities.
Tactic 4	Investigate possible viable BAS programs. (<i>psychology, political science, math</i>)
Strategy 3	Research and expand experiential learning options (e.g., internships/apprenticeships).
Tactic 1	Establish a student showcase. (<i>internships, research, capstone</i>)
Tactic 2	Increase resources and opportunities for internships.

Pillar 1: Innovate Academic Programming (cont.)

Strategy 4	Innovate course delivery.
Tactic 1	Determine the feasibility of block programming by 2025. <i>(program-specific, CTE-fit, AAS possibility)</i>
Tactic 2	Offer short courses that increase community engagement.
Tactic 3	Increase opportunities for micro-credentialing. <i>(success builds success, skill set increased, more attractive to employers)</i>
Tactic 4	Identify and recruit guest lecturers. <i>(class-specific and general interest events)</i>
Tactic 5	Expand hybrid/high flex delivery.
Tactic 6	Expand Universal Design for course accessibility.
Tactic 7	Add all Zoom/synchronous classes on WYCLASS.
Tactic 8	Evaluate options to expand open educational resource utilization and reduce cost of attendance.
Strategy 5	Promote and enhance programming that aligns with distinction and/or destination of place.

Tactic 1 Commit funds to expand or refine programs to align with the vision.

Pillar 2:

Attract New Students and Quality Employees

<p>Strategy 1</p>	<p>Enhance the NWC brand through new investment in marketing and communications to improve recruitment, institutional reputation, and alumni engagement across the state and region.</p>
<p>Tactic 1</p>	<p>Develop and implement a more robust annual marketing plan that aligns closely with strategic enrollment goals and adheres to higher education best practices.</p>
<p>Tactic 2</p>	<p>Continue to monitor higher education communications and marketing trends; adhere to industry best practice guidelines while making room for innovation; pivot tactics as needed to aim for high performance.</p>
<p>Tactic 3</p>	<p>Expand video offerings across various platforms. <i>(program, facility, student/employee/alum profiles, drone videography)</i></p>
<p>Tactic 4</p>	<p>Continue enhancements to all marketing content with clear messaging and dynamic visuals. Eliminate inconsistent, confusing, and poorly constructed branding.</p>
<p>Tactic 5</p>	<p>Ensure the website serves the needs of its target audience(s), supports enrollment initiatives, and adheres to regulatory requirements.</p>
<p>Tactic 6</p>	<p>Explore and develop a significant college rebranding effort to better communicate the College’s story in a fresh, compelling, and modern way; use the lens of Distinction or Destination to inform and clarify brand initiatives.</p>
<p>Tactic 7</p>	<p>Explore the feasibility of renaming the College as part of the rebranding effort; build a case documenting who/what/why/when/how and cost; present findings to the NWC Board of Trustees, as requested, for their consideration.</p>

Pillar 2: Attract New Students and Quality Employees (cont.)

Strategy 2	Elevate Strategic Enrollment efforts.
Tactic 1	Develop and implement a more robust Strategic Enrollment Plan that supports the Vision and follows higher education best practices.
Tactic 2	Develop and target enrollment goals (1-2% increments) emphasizing student groups with the highest potential for growth potential (<i>traditional, non-traditional, in-state, WUE, out-of-state</i>)
Tactic 3	Embrace diversity in ideas, experiences, and identity in recruiting students.
Tactic 4	Integrate a comprehensive communications plan in enrollment initiatives.
Tactic 5	Ensure enrollment and admissions process is efficient and student-centered.
Tactic 6	Streamline the scholarship award process.
Strategy 3	Attract and hire highly qualified faculty and staff.
Tactic 1	Enhance messaging about the benefits of NWC and the community.
Tactic 2	Streamline hiring processes.
Tactic 3	Embrace diversity in ideas, experiences, and identity in faculty and staff recruitment.

Pillar 3: Champion Student and Employee Retention and Success

Strategy 1	Sustain high levels of degree or certificate attainment.
Tactic 1	Maintain retention at or above the state average.
Tactic 2	Maintain completion at or above the state average.
Tactic 3	Increase awareness of programming and access to student support services.
Tactic 4	Build on NWC's successful history of student retention and completion initiatives. <i>(e.g., Pathways, 15-to-Finish, First Year Seminar, Hero grant, Help Alert)</i>
Strategy 2	Enhance extracurricular activities to extend learning experiences beyond the classroom.
Tactic 1	Design and implement extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities that provide intellectual, social, and emotional growth.
Tactic 2	Provide individual and group awards/recognition for student extracurricular and co-curricular engagement.
Tactic 3	Ensure student housing experience enriches students' social, intellectual, and emotional growth.
Tactic 4	Embrace global engagement to support diversity, equity, and inclusion as a part of the NWC experience.
Tactic 5	Expand awareness of and engagement in student activities, athletics, and campus events.
Strategy 3	Develop and retain a highly qualified faculty and staff.
Tactic 1	Design and fund the Teaching and Learning Center to serve all employees.
Tactic 2	Fund a Professional Development Endowment.
Tactic 3	Develop an onboarding system for all employees to connect them to the College.

Pillar 3: Champion Student and Employee Retention and Success (cont.)

Strategy 3	Develop and retain a highly qualified faculty and staff (cont.).
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Tactic 4 Advocate for compensation and benefits.

Tactic 5 Incentivize employee service in college-sponsored events.

Strategy 4	Enhance employee benefits.
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Tactic 1 Increase awareness of current benefits.
(comprehensive list, ease of access)

Tactic 2 Identify opportunities to enhance benefits for employees.

Tactic 3 Design a Flexible Work Arrangement model.

Pillar 4: Revitalize Campus

Strategy 1	Build, enhance, and support campus infrastructure to compete with regional institutions.
Tactic 1	Complete and implement a new Facilities Master Plan.
Tactic 2	Lead Construction of Student Center.
Tactic 3	Advocate for Master plan funding.
Strategy 2	Grow revenue to improve affordability and accessibility.
Tactic 1	Expand and strengthen community engagement throughout the Big Horn Basin.
Tactic 2	Advocate for legislative support.
Tactic 3	Investigate and expand sanctioned/recognized student activity expansion opportunities if viable.
Tactic 4	Investigate and expand athletic team expansion opportunities if viable.
Strategy 3	Retain the focus on operational efficiencies.
Tactic 1	Create a culture that understands and is supportive of the Strategic Plan and is committed to its fulfillment.
Tactic 2	Set standards for academic and support program effectiveness and efficiency that align with higher education best practices.
Tactic 3	Complete policy manual and focus on separation of procedures.

Pillar 4: Revitalize Campus (cont.)

Strategy 4 Partner with Foundation to align fundraising initiatives to support College strategic goals.

Tactic 1 Structure scholarship awards to be competitive and support enrollment.

Tactic 2 Identify opportunities to establish additional Endowed Chairs.

Tactic 3 Expand partnerships with program-related industries for scholarships and program support.

Tactic 4 Collaborate with academic departments and programs to identify successful alumni and engage them in campus initiatives.

Appendix I: Why a Strategic Plan

In 2021-22 Northwest College celebrated its 75th anniversary. What began as a partnership between the University of Wyoming and the Park County School District #1 has flourished into a high-quality, comprehensive community college of tremendous accomplishment.

The landscape of higher education is changing. National undergraduate enrollment has decreased over the past decade, particularly at community colleges. Future enrollment is uncertain as institutions are increasingly competing for students. Budgets are shrinking. Students desire more flexibility than in the past.

Throughout its history, NWC has been no stranger to change. The budget and enrollment challenges we have faced are no exception. History has taught us that times of uncertainty can also be incubators for unprecedented creativity, innovation, and change. We are committed to a future where NWC will celebrate its 150th anniversary and many more milestone anniversaries.

To do that, we must think big. We must be bold and stretch the College to new possibilities for the future sustainability of the College and the citizens that we serve.

Over the past three years, Northwest College has worked to re-envision and position itself for the future. We have spent time discussing what is unique to NWC and how to use those strengths. Through challenges, the College has proven itself to be flexible, resilient, and resourceful.

We have re-envisioned and reinvigorated what started as a Vision 2025 plan to become a robust Strategic Plan 2030, which incorporates the transformational work completed over the past three years and provides clear direction for the College's future efforts.

Appendix II: Our Mission

In the context of our global society, the mission of Northwest College is to:

BE STUDENT-CENTERED

At NWC, being student-centered means:

- Instruction focused on student learning
- Student-centered course offerings
- Flexible programs and offices that:
 - Anticipate student needs with predictive and proactive planning, and
 - Respond to emerging needs in a timely fashion
- High-quality academic advising
- User-friendly, easy-to-find resources for students
- Accessible and innovative learning spaces
- Vibrant student life opportunities

BE FORWARD-THINKING

At NWC, being forward-thinking means:

- Anticipating change through proactive innovation
- Fostering flexibility
- Investing in continuous learning for faculty and staff

CULTIVATE COMMUNITY

At NWC, cultivating community means:

- Inspiring school spirit and connection
- Upholding a culture of accountability, integrity, and respect
- Promoting meaningful collaboration across divisions, programs, offices, and with alumni.

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR TRANSFER, CAREER, AND LIFE

At NWC, preparing students for transfer means:

- Enhancing students' ability to apply sophomore-level concepts and skills to advanced academic contexts
- Ensuring easily articulable classes and seamless transfer

At NWC, preparing students for career means:

- Developing students' ability to apply principles and skills to workplace problems and situations
- Enhancing students' skills in management, leadership, and collaboration

Appendix II: Our Mission (cont.)

- Increasing students' technological fluency
- Cultivating students' commitment to accurate work and personal achievement

At NWC, preparing students for life means:

- Developing students' openness to new ideas, capacity to make wise decisions, and sense of responsibility for their actions
- Improving students' time management skills
- Leading students to treat others generously and with respect

RETAIN AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

At NWC, retaining and graduating students means:

- Providing support and opportunities to motivate students to persist from one semester to the next
- Providing support and opportunities to motivate students to complete their degrees



nwc.edu/mission

Appendix III: Perspective

Northwest College has been serving Wyoming citizens for over seventy-five years. Higher education attainment provides higher lifetime earning opportunities and improved quality of life. But costs to obtain educational degrees have continued to grow, placing burdens on States, communities, and students to support degree attainment. The following constraints and advantages were considered while developing the strategic plan.

Constraints

In the past 10 years, state support for community colleges has been reduced 5 times, resulting in staffing and operational reductions across the college. The variables included in the State funding model, governor and legislative agendas, and shifting economic revenue have produced unpredictable year-by-year state support for community colleges.

State policymakers have launched initiatives that influence or mandate decisions on programming, most recently shaping community college focus to job readiness to foster economic development. Available expedient funding is distributed according to the potential for job creation, an outcome that is challenging to achieve in rural Wyoming.

A societal shift in attitudes toward college enrollment has resulted in a significant decline in undergraduate enrollment. Depending on the source, enrollment in public two-year colleges has declined 9-15% since 2012.

Advantages

Staff and faculty demonstrate the willingness and ability to confront and overcome challenges that arise from circumstances beyond their control.

A strong and successful NWC Foundation provides financial support for students and program initiatives.

A solid physical infrastructure supports programming and student experience.

A participatory governance process provides an opportunity for all College employees to contribute.

Geographical location is a draw for students according to their interests.

NWC serves the community with a range of learning opportunities, including community education (Powell Valley Community Education), workforce training, technical education, job skills, and academic transfer programs.

Appendix IV: The Process

November 2019

- Hosted 7 strategic visioning sessions for employees, students, business leaders, and community members in Powell, Cody, and Meeteetse.
- Surveyed employees, students, local business owners, and community members to get feedback on what topics should be the top five priorities for Northwest College over the next five years.

February 2020

- The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) used 743 qualitative data points from the listening sessions and surveys in an Interactive Qualitative Analysis method to analyze the raw data and group them into clusters of common themes or affinity groups. IEC then completed an analysis to finalize affinity groups and subcategories to be used in the next steps of the institutional visioning.

The four categories that emerged from this work were:

- INNOVATE Academic Programming
- ATTRACT New Students and Quality Employees
- CHAMPION Student and Employee Retention and Success
- REVITALIZE Campus

March 2020

- *COVID pandemic begins, stifling strategic efforts in the rollout of the visioning and transformational work.*

May 2020

- Representatives from a cross-section of campus constituencies who participated in the *NWC Summer Leadership Institute 2019* class refined these four categories into a meaningful theme that the College could identify with and rally behind a new strategic vision. The Vision 2025 compass theme was developed for a visual.

June 2020 – October 2021

- Engaged CampusWorks to assist with an institutional transformation effort:
 - Phase 1: Collective Visioning, July - October 2020
 - Phase 2: External and Internal Scanning, December 2020 - May 2021
 - Phase 3: Transformation Plan, August 2021 – October 2021

Appendix IV: The Process (cont.)

March 2022

- President Watson presented the *Northwest College Transformational Change* memo to the NWC Board of Trustees. The Board voted to support a transformational vision emphasizing Distinction and Destination of Place, and to support the development of a sustainable strategic plan, including consolidating the Vision 2025 efforts into the Vision 2030 plan.

May 2022

- President Watson led a campus-wide Strategic Planning workshop to discuss the four pillars (Innovate, Attract, Champion, and Revitalize), supporting the vision and developing strategies specific to each pillar.

August 2022

- President's Staff utilized the feedback from the May 2022 workshop to hone strategies for use during the second campus-wide Strategic Planning workshop at the opening day session for the Fall 2022 semester.
- President Watson led the second workshop for campus members to develop and identify tactics needed to support previously identified strategies.

September 2022

- President's Staff utilized the feedback from the August 2022 workshop to hone the tactics under each pillar; a draft of the strategic plan outline for Vision 2030 was presented to the NWC Board of Trustees for discussion and feedback. President's Staff further developed ancillary narrative information to complete a draft plan to be presented to the Board in October 2022.
- President's Staff:
 - Lisa Watson, President
 - Gerry Giraud, Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - Dee Havig, Interim Vice President for Student Services
 - Shelby Wetzell, Executive Director of the NWC Foundation & Alumni
 - Carey Miller, Communications & Marketing Director
 - Lisa Smith, Institutional Research Manager

October 2022 and November 2022

- The NWC Board of Trustees holds first and second readings, then votes to adopt the Strategic Plan Vision 2030.

Appendix V: The Structure

The Strategic Plan consists of six elements that support and are guided by the College's **Mission**:

- **Vision** statement that reflects what a successful future looks like
- **Pillars** that define the kind of college we want to be
- **Strategies** (goals) that identify the achievements to accomplish under the Pillars
- **Tactics** (actions) required to fulfill the Strategies
- **Operations** of each department/program/service/office to actualize the Tactics
- **Evaluation** to track progress towards the Plan; adjustments may be made as necessary.

The **Mission** is concrete, immovable, and enduring. It is the essence of what we do.

The two-part **Vision** (Distinction and Destination of place) is the overarching statement that guides where we are headed. It provides direction and a lens for the following elements.

The four **Pillars** define the pathways for fulfilling the Vision and Mission. They reach the core of what is most important for the College.

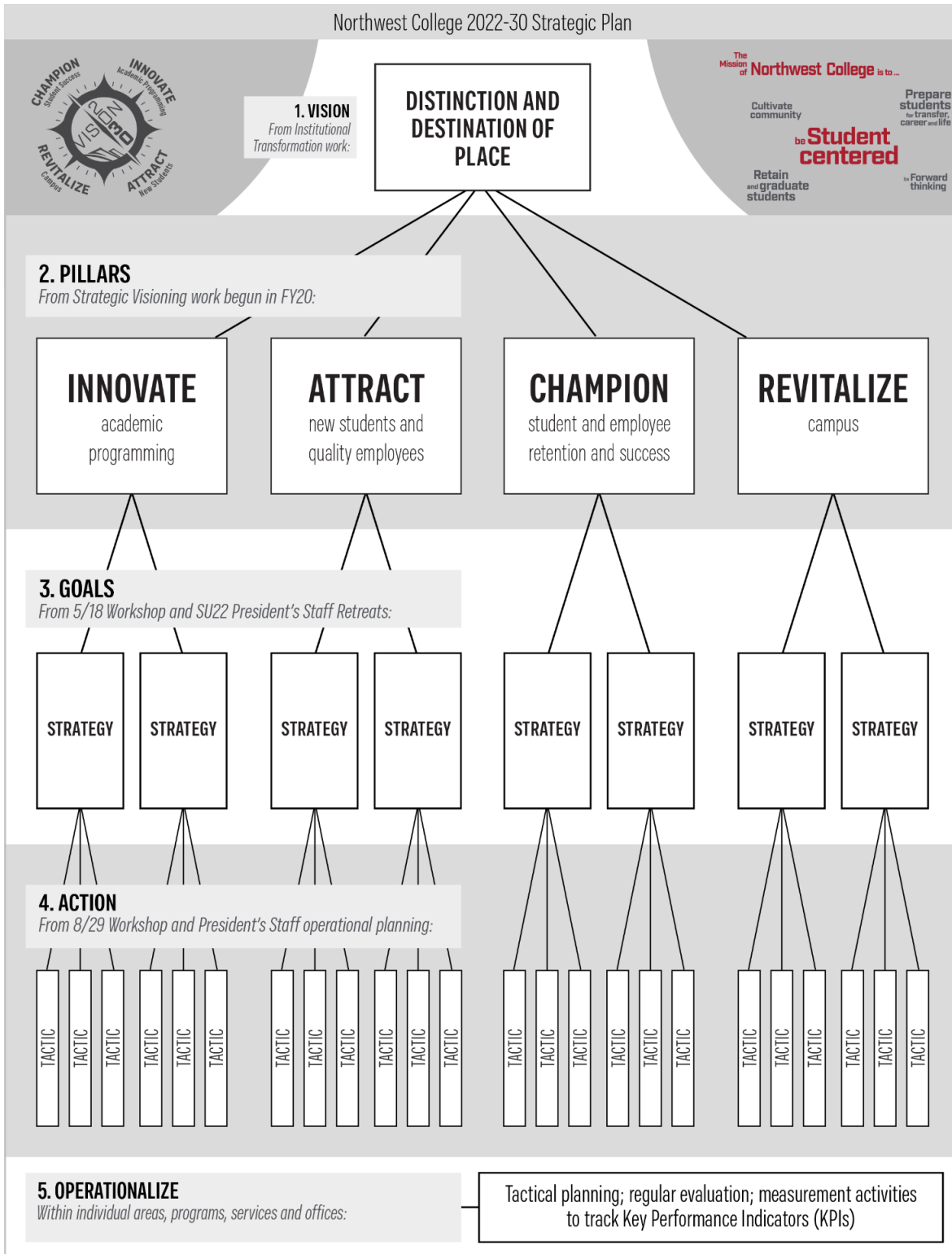
Strategies are high-level goals that direct where NWC will focus energy and resources so underlying tactics can be identified, planned, executed, and assessed with clarity and efficiency.

Tactics are actions taken to accomplish the Strategies. They corresponded to the needs of the College when the Plan was developed while remaining fluid to address changing conditions yet are still consistent with the respective Strategies. Tactics are developed by departments, through committees, or via task force.

Operationalizing work is the process of moving the plan forward. Tactics are developed into project plans with measurable results. Regular assessment is used to measure progress and track Key Performance Indicators. Adjustments are made as conditions change to keep the Plan relevant.

The Strategic Plan is not static. It is a dynamic roadmap to the future and guide decision-making for Northwest College.

Appendix VI: Visualization of the Structure



Appendix VII: The Vision

The world is changing rapidly, and so is the higher education landscape. Changing demographics, industry growth, regulation, cost escalation, and student needs require a responsiveness not seen previously in higher education. As traditional enrollments drop and funding sources remain unstable, the College seeks to retain its focus on preparing students to succeed in transfer, career, and life.

When developing its new strategic plan, the College desired to implement initiatives to minimize future reductions to programming and operations. Strategic visioning sessions suggested the time was right to move forward with more than a new five-year strategic plan but rather an initiative focused on transformational change. Incredibly, more than 400 voices contributed to the visioning and transformational effort.

Throughout the process, impressive work was noted in transfer articulation, expanded career and technical programming, the newly instituted bachelor's program, enrollment processes, shared governance, budgeting, policy, scheduling, and campus physical improvements. The College provided overwhelming support to continue efforts around expanded enrollment, marketing, and branding efforts to ensure sustainability.

Ideas began to develop around the concepts of destination, pathways, workforce, and distinctive programming. Upon further analysis, discussion, and alignment of opportunities and offerings, a vision statement was created to guide the future direction of the College.

Our vision 2030:

DISTINCTION AND DESTINATION OF PLACE

Conclusion

The execution of the Strategic Plan will be instrumental in furthering the vision of distinction and destination of place. By promoting innovative academic programming, revitalizing the campus, and attracting, retaining, and promoting student and employee success, these efforts will sustain the mission of Northwest College and focus on transformational change.