



NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

Memo

To: Board of Trustees

From: Dr. Devin Stephenson, President

Date: October 18, 2022

Re: ENGAGE NWFSC: Measures of Excellence for Year Three

In three-year cycles, the College implements a strategic plan that informs institutional decision making and budget development. Rather than a pass-fail report card, it is an accountability measure for continuous improvement, tracking performance on targets over time. Every department is responsible for pulling together to implement the goals.

The Goals: The Board launched the College's current plan, *ENGAGE NWFSC*, in July 2020 with three goals:

1. Classroom (Student Focus): to fully empower NWFSC students through quality instruction, faculty connection, and supportive learning communities to maximize their individual potential;
2. Campus (Faculty & Staff Focus): to thoroughly enhance NWFSC employee experiences through talent management practices that focus on recruitment, retention, professional development, and recognition to optimize our greatest asset; and
3. Community (Community & Industry Focus): to effectively engage with the community through initiatives focused on community, workforce, and economic development.

These goals remain our lodestar for the entire Strategic Plan. These goals have not changed throughout the plan cycle.

The Measures: The College strives to meet our goals through nine Measures of Excellence, which the Board votes on annually. The Board uses the Measures to assess progress. For Year 3, the College recommends two updated Measures: Goal 2 Measure 1 and Goal 3 Measure 3.

- Goal 2 Measure 1: The College recommends broadening the scope from “increased number of faculty & staff actively involved in all aspects of the College including task forces and workgroups” to “invest in recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.” The College already requires employees to participate in task forces and workgroups for *ENGAGE NWFSC*, whereas continuing investment in recruitment and retention of faculty and staff is a priority that impacts all departments and operations and on which the College can demonstrate its further progress.
- Goal 3 Measure 3: The College recommends broadening the focus from “increased partnerships with business & industry, local, regional, state, and federal agencies/entities to address regional workforce demands” to “expand community perceptions about the College.” Because the College works with more partners each year, a more effective Measure would be to assess our community relationships and the community's perspective on the College.

The Annual Targets: To assess the College's performance, the Board reviews the annual targets that the College aims for on each measure. The College recommends that the categories of achievement for Year Three should be “Not Met” (which means the College is below the baseline), “Met” (which means the College is between the baseline and the target), and “Exceeded” (which means the College outperformed the Board-established target).

The Strategies: While the Measures are what the Board votes on each year, the College offers details regarding strategies that the College uses to achieve to those Measures. For example, the President shares his budget priorities during budget season, but as financial needs facing the College throughout the year evolve, the President may adjust those priorities to reflect the specific areas of need for the College.

During the September meeting, Trustees questioned the use of the term “equity” in two places in the Strategies.

- Goal 1 Measure 2: The President shared his priority that budget requests reflect efforts to “intentionally create enhanced systems that improve student completion rates and close the equity gaps among underserved populations.” The gaps we are measuring are academic achievement gaps among underserved populations.
- Goal 2 Measure 3: The President shared his budget priority that departmental budgets reflect their efforts to “promote equity, diversity, and inclusion internally and in the community.” Among our strategies is to ensure continued compliance with “federal and state law regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

Rest assured that “equity” in this context does not mean excluding one group to favor another, creating any preferences, creating retributive policies, or otherwise denying privileges to any student or employee. To the contrary, closing equity gaps means that the College is striving for access, availability, affordability, and achievement, for any person who wants to become a member of the Raider family. The College’s intention is always to bring in as many students as possible from all backgrounds, including those who have not traditionally had access to any college education due to the economic or other challenges they and their families have faced. Identifying gaps for any student who struggles to complete their college education and bridging those gaps is a key to achieving the Measure of increased completions.

Likewise, regarding our staff and community engagement efforts, terms such as “equity” and “inclusion” do not mean creating barriers for any member of our community. Rather, our goal is to reflect the demographics of our service area and promote full community participation. The College regularly assesses whether we are inviting all qualified people to join our staff and offering the tools, resources, training, and incentives necessary to retain staff. The strategy related to training meant we ensure that we meet federal and state requirements (e.g., Title IX *and* the Florida Educational Equity Act). Also, the Florida Department of Education annually assesses whether the College is meeting its duties under the Florida Educational Equity Act by viewing data about the College’s student and employee demographics.

As a result of further review and after hearing the Board’s conversation, we updated Goal 1 Measure 2 and Goal 2 Measure 3 to clarify both strategies. The President appreciates the Board’s honest feedback and looks forward to successfully completing the last year of *ENGAGE NWFSC*.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board of Trustees approves the *ENGAGE NWFSC* Strategic Plan Measures of Excellence and Annual Targets for Year Three, as presented.