

Addendum

Stakeholder Engagement (Internal)

Starting in April of 2022, in tandem with a broad invitation for STCC students, staff and faculty to embrace the role of ambassador and serve on the Strategic Planning Task Force, the college formalized an agreement with CampusWorks to serve as strategic plan facilitator and consultant. Over the next 12-months, a process that ultimately generated **Momentum: 2023-2028**, can best be described as consistently and deeply engaging for internal stakeholders, with significant participation opportunities for all STCC students, and all STCC employees, who number approximately 700. In addition to the use of All-College Town Halls to kick-off, and provide status updates, throughout the year CampusWorks curated workshops that included “Trends in Higher Education,” “Defining the Student Experience,” “Future Summit,” and “Action Planning.” A campus survey seeking perspective on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) was also conducted, and all told, hundreds of STCC students, staff and faculty were not only included in the development of the strategic plan, but the CampusWorks methodology further provided training and experiences so stakeholders had a clear understanding of goal and objective development, and how plan implementation will unfold. As an example, at the Future Summit, a large conference-style event, stakeholders heard “Ed Talks” that were combined with smaller workgroups where participants were asked to develop two-three impact statements that would support plan development. At college Professional Days that served as the organizing modality for some of the strategic planning forums, participation included approximately 200 faculty and staff.

Additional Context

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders were asked to engage deeply with STCC data and metrics to more clearly understand where the college stood with respect to existing goals, including equity, but also programmatic, enrollment, fiscal, and infrastructure/facilities considerations. For example, STCC commissioned an Environmental Scan from EMSI/Burning Glass (2022), and that information regarding high/low demand, and high/low supply programs, was shared not only with the Task Force, but via Academic Affairs with School Deans and Department Chairs/Curriculum Coordinators. Given the timing of institutional accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), STCC leveraged a recent Self Study (2021) that itself included participation from close to 150 students, staff and faculty. Appraisal and projection elements in the Self Study were particularly relevant for strategic planning, with an example described for NECHE regarding Standard 2 (Planning and Evaluation) that includes utilization of large, multi-year federal grants in HSI-STEM, Title III, and TRiO [in the Fall of 2021 a total of \$7.35 million was awarded to STCC to boost success among Latino/Latina/x and low-income STEM students]. One operational outcome from ongoing grant support has been continued use of “Supplemental Instruction” (an embedded peer tutor model) to support student success, with data indicating higher student retention in courses with this resource. This type of crosswalk, including examples that map goals and objectives to measures of success, was also utilized as part of Trustee engagement. STCC enjoyed participation from a Trustee liaison serving as a member of the Task Force, and Board members were keen supporters of plan development, including their affirmation of the college mission/vision.

Vetting by the college of a final/draft strategic plan was conducted with survey support from CampusWorks, and after nearly a year of collective effort and engagement. At an April All-College Town Hall, some of the residual feedback on macro considerations had to do with the goal Elevate Our Technical Mission, and how that was interpreted and understood beyond the School of STEM, and School of Health and Patient Simulation; qualitatively, the plan was well received with a degree of focus that is appreciated by so many employees. **Momentum: 2023-2028** represents a significant accomplishment for all internal stakeholders given the most recent strategic plan dates to 2015.

Community Engagement (External)

STCC takes pride in both of our “middle names,” with broad inclusion of community and external stakeholders an enduring and iterative process at the college, not only during strategic planning. By this we mean there is a longstanding approach to seeking feedback, input, and formative perspective from businesses and employers, non-profit and community-based organizations, other education entities, governmental agencies and policymakers, as well as community leaders. Our efforts to build and sustain relationships in service to the strengthening of communities is first and foremost evident by a set of program advisory boards that numbers 28, with over 300 individuals serving as advisors to programs that include Nursing, Dental Sciences, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology/Robotics, and Photonics/Optics to name just a few. Focusing on the School of Health and Patient Simulation (SHPS), with an unusually broad array of accredited programs (12), each with an Advisory Board, annual surveys are sent to employers to assess the performance of STCC graduates, illustrating a particular avenue of engagement pursued by the college.

With the largest undergraduate enrollment in the City of Springfield (the third largest municipality in the Commonwealth), federal designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and with status as the most affordable undergraduate option in the city, STCC is deeply embedded in the fabric of our region and within the education ecosystem. Completing his seventh year, the STCC president is an extension of community engagement efforts, and serves as a board member for the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, a non-profit with approximately 100 business, organization, education, and affiliated partners seeking to catalyze economic development resources. The president also serves as a member of the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, the region’s primary planner and convener for workforce development, and the state entity tasked with establishing the formal “Labor Market Blueprint” for the Pioneer Valley region, which itself is generated from significant community needs assessment. As a longstanding, and principle education resource for Springfield and Hampden County, the particular “technical” mission focus for STCC translates to long-standing relationships with key industries including STEM/manufacturing and healthcare.

Consistent feedback from community partners as part of ongoing engagement is the desire to see STCC graduate more students, and graduate more diverse students from our unique programs; “workforce demand” therefore, is a constant refrain in so many external conversations. To this point, and as described in our 2021 NECHE institutional Self Study, programs that include Mechanical Engineering Technology, Nursing, and Dental Hygiene have seen significant increases in enrollment and degree conferral for students of color between 2015–2019; in 2019, STCC conferred more than double the amount of Nursing and Mechanical Engineering degrees completed by students of color when compared to 2015. With the launch in 2019 of a novel A.S. degree in Health Science, the college has also developed a unique program scaffold for diverse students

“I cannot think of five stronger synthesized goals for the future of STCC. I think you and the task force truly nailed where the institution - as a powerful (and unfortunately, still untapped) partner - should be going next... this plan would seemingly mandate - as we exist in a resource-limited world - a lot of reorganization (systems and people).”

- Community Partner

to pursue healthcare fields by leveraging courses in patient simulation as well as embedded career certifications (EMT, CNA, Phlebotomy, Sterile Processing). Fall 2022 enrollment in Health Science surpassed 200 students (approximately 50% students of color), and this program serves as a signature reference in conversations with ecosystem partners (employers/healthcare providers, non-profits, governmental officials and policymakers) , and is part of our designated Early College pathway with both the Springfield High School of Commerce and Veritas Charter Prep.

Additional Context

Other specific examples of community engagement that translate to strategic ecosystem development and advancement include non-credit, as well as credit-bearing, initiatives. For example, in 2020, STCC partnered with the Massachusetts Water Works Association and Springfield Water and Sewer Commission to launch a statewide “Working Water” initiative that provides online training to prepare people for industry exams and licensing. In 2022, STCC joined with New North Citizens’ Council in support of a YouthBuild award that includes healthcare and STEM pathways for young adults to the college. A Para Educator Academy was also launched by the STCC Division of Workforce Development in partnership with Springfield Public Schools to expand preparation opportunities, with successful completion translating into 2-credits in the STCC Early Education degree. Baystate Health, a large healthcare provider with multiple acute care facilities, and over 12,000 employees is a significant partner given the scope and scale of healthcare programs at STCC. Again, Baystate and STCC have longstanding and well-established relationships that flow through the School of Health and Patient Simulation. The Nursing program in particular, with approximately 1,000 STCC graduates over the past 12 years, is the highest demand career per the regional Labor Market Blueprint, and STCC continues to pursue collaborations, not only in partnership with Baystate, Trinity/Mercy Medical, and other healthcare providers, but also with Westfield State University, with whom STCC has a 3+1 Nursing pathway that includes the final year taught pre-pandemic in Springfield. In late 2022 the Executive Office of Education awarded STCC and Westfield State a \$600,000 Nursing pathways grant to support career navigation.

At STCC, in addition to having students regularly hired by Pratt & Whitney, a Fortune 500 defense and aerospace company, the college regularly hosts new engineers to train on our three and five-axis mills and lathes. We continue to nurture apprenticeship opportunities at Smith & Wesson, and STCC alumni can be found in the leadership ranks of companies from the expansive regional manufacturing segment that include Savage Arms. STCC has a novel baccalaureate pathway in applied manufacturing with Northeastern University, and we have a Society of Women Engineers Chapter. More recently, STCC was awarded close to \$5 million to establish a Cyber Center of Excellence at Union Station in Springfield. Given community conversations centered around the need for expanding the cyber workforce, STCC has taken the lead to bring a Cyber Range and Security Operations Center to Western Massachusetts, with significant ecosystem support coming from local (City of Springfield), state (Mass Tech Collaborative), and federal (\$3 million earmark from Congressman Richard E. Neal) sources.

The college also receives support from the STCC Foundation, which not only provides institutional aid and student scholarships/financial resources (through approximately \$5.5 million in total assets under investment), but has supported the college with investments that include the purchase of off-campus student parking (an approximately \$1.5 million project). It is likely that STCC, in partnership with the STCC Foundation, will pursue a capital campaign in 2025 in support of the major capital/project award from DCAMM (Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance) of \$30 million to relocate the School of Health and Patient Simulation.

As a final point of emphasis specific to community engagement in service to **Momentum: 2023-2028**, in early 2023, the draft strategic goals, as well as equity lens description, were shared with 55 community leaders from the region. These individuals represent government (local/state), non-profit/human service organizations, as well as healthcare, manufacturing and other mid-sized businesses, along with leadership from other institutions of higher education. As a process point within strategic planning that augments our ongoing iterative process of community engagement, feedback was solicited from this group, which included asking for feedback and comments specific to the draft goals and equity lens. Leaders were also asked what areas of emphasis, or points of focus, they would like to see from STCC in the next strategic plan. As one leader shared, “well done ... since there is a direct benefit of the ...work [with our organization]... I was especially pleased to see the emphasis on the interconnected system of partnerships.” Regional community leaders want to see STCC continue to thrive, and be the access institution, particularly for the City of Springfield.

Lastly, as of May 2023, a housing agreement was signed between STCC and American International College (AIC), two institutions less than two miles apart on State Street in Springfield. STCC students attending STCC full-time now have by way of AIC, a dedicated and secure housing opportunity, further demonstrating the “ecosystem” approach needed in the city and region. Given the housing needs of community college students, but also the opportunity to preview baccalaureate pathways down the road, this is a partnership that is not yet able to forecast numbers, but nevertheless provides a unique community college-housing arrangement.

To summarize community and external stakeholder engagement, **Momentum: 2023-2028** represents a significant accomplishment in that so many community partners and employers are looking for STCC to continue doing the important work the college has done for the past 56 years. STCC has excellence support for strategic planning from the broader community, especially given a network of over 40,000 alumni.