

Kirkwood Community College

# Learner Success Agenda

August 2013 Update

## Our Vision

Kirkwood's **Learner Success Agenda** (LSA) was launched in June, 2011 with these two over-arching goals:

**CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT:** We will significantly increase the number of learners who achieve their postsecondary education or training goals, complete a degree or certificate, transfer to a university, and/or complete non-credit workforce education courses or programs.

**COMMITMENT:** Every faculty and staff member shares the responsibility for achieving the **Learner Success Agenda** through their daily work. Kirkwood's credit and non-credit instructional programs play a central role in carrying out the agenda, but our success depends on the efforts of people in non-academic as well as academic services.

Two years later, the **Learner Success Agenda** is clearly situated within Kirkwood's culture. Individual and departmental goals set by every Kirkwood employee and department are linked to this vision. At every level, Kirkwood is focused on increasing learner success through institutional and departmental professional development.

## Why This Agenda Remains Important

Kirkwood Community College has endorsed the **Learner Success Agenda** as a framework for improving the economic strength and quality of life for our region. We believe: 1) education leads to greater economic prosperity for the region; 2) all citizens will benefit as more become educated; and 3) Iowa's workforce will benefit from greater numbers of educated and skilled workers.

Over the past few years, a wide variety of organizations nationally have developed a "college completion agenda." Spurred by President Obama and funded by major foundations, they have taken on the common goal of significantly increasing the number of American adults who have earned a post-secondary credential. Kirkwood's **Learner**

**Success Agenda** is part of this movement, applying strategies specific to Kirkwood and the region we serve to achieve the common goal.

As a result of the first two years of work on the **Learner Success Agenda**, the college is better positioned to serve our students. Kirkwood's faculty and staff are talented, entrepreneurial, and collaborative, and have shown remarkable commitment and focus to advance these efforts. The progress summarized below has resulted from the dedication of hundreds of individuals working in dozens of cross-departmental LSA teams since June, 2011.

During these two years, Kirkwood Community College's accreditation was reviewed. Throughout the review process, the **Learner Success Agenda** provided the structure that served to organize all elements. Kirkwood's Academic Quality Improvement Plan (AQIP) accreditation was re-affirmed by the Higher Learning Commission in December, 2012.

To see the **Learner Success Agenda** full plan, go to <http://www.kirkwood.edu/learnersuccessagenda>

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## Strategic Initiatives

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**Instructional Innovation** (Bill Lamb)

**To improve learner success through integrated services and collaborative instructional improvement.**

Several tactic teams focused on strengthening student services have recommended changes in late registration, new student orientation, academic advising, and course prerequisite identification. Some of these changes have been implemented; a few are still in process. Changes to the orientation process for new faculty have also been implemented through the Master Teacher program. Pathway models for students enrolled in non-credit and/or credit career programs are in development. Multiple strategies are underway to advance a team-based faculty professional development approach, including sharing successful teaching practices, setting standards for classroom technology, and faculty mentoring recommendations.

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**Program Effectiveness** (Al Rowe)

**Implement an improved evaluation process for aligning existing credit/non-credit programs to address workforce needs, new opportunities, and resource allocation.**

Developed by a cross-functional tactic team, a Program Effectiveness/Efficiency Review policy was approved resulting in the design of *Effectiveness Profiles* to annually assess all educational offerings in the College's *Program of Studies*. As of Fall 2013, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders will use profile data/evidence to inform curriculum/program design and resource allocation decisions and to ensure program/subject offerings are high quality, relevant, accessible, and cost effective.

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**Educational Delivery** (Jon Neff)

**To strengthen strategic and flexible educational delivery capabilities.**

Three diversely-resourced tactic teams made up of faculty and staff have been working on: 1) developing ways to help our learners navigate the many offerings and delivery methods Kirkwood makes available; 2) designing new flexible scheduling options to help fill community demand for workers with particular skills; and 3) creating a better way for students, faculty and staff to access their applications and data anywhere, anytime and on any device.

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**Regional Leadership** (Kim Johnson)

**To strengthen leadership in regional workforce development.**

Partnerships are at the foundation of Kirkwood's success. Demonstrating the strength of these partnerships, the Kirkwood Foundation's *Real World Success* campaign raised over \$18.9 million in the past two years to support learner success through scholarships and other gifts. To promote a systematic approach to developing transformational partnerships, a tactic team created a mechanism to document and evaluate Kirkwood's partnerships and community involvement throughout the Creative Corridor. Through the work of another tactic team, Kirkwood will be in a position to measure the institution's regional impact and better communicate the multiple ways in which academic and professional programs benefit the region's economic and workforce position.

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### Market Intelligence (Kristie Fisher)

#### **To improve market planning and competitive intelligence.**

Five tactic teams comprised of staff and faculty dedicated the last two years to better understanding the community and students we serve, as well as the competitive forces in our marketplace. The graduate follow-up tactic team designed and implemented an improved process for learning about our graduates. To improve instruction, another team developed a roster to provide critical information to faculty about the students in their classes.

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### Operational Excellence (Jim Choate)

#### **To create transparent sustainable organizational systems and structures to support strategic initiatives.**

Kirkwood must operate efficiently and effectively to achieve its goals. To that end, over the last two years several human resource systems have been automated and other business processes have been improved. A new compensation and benefits structure has been implemented. New budget reporting software is in use that will make it possible for Kirkwood to forecast long-range scenarios. An assessment of cultural attitudes on diversity has been completed, and a partnership with Diversity Focus has been established for the development and implementation of cultural competence training modules.

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### Information Excellence (Mick Starcevich)

#### **Increase access, understanding and use of timely and relevant information, reports and research.**

Per a Data Resource Policy, data dictionary and security work, users can better identify data inconsistencies, document data capture and management processes. Externally, federal/state report data is submitted earlier and more thoroughly vetted. Internally, Effectiveness Profile data mart work is underway to support program improvement and future research on College efforts to strengthen student learning.

## Going Forward

The best plans are living documents, able to adapt to constantly changing circumstances. As several of the original **Learner Success Agenda** tactics are drawing to a close, new needs have been identified, and three new tactics have been developed for inclusion in the LSA. They are:

**At-risk student support and completion.** An enhanced student success model that supports at-risk learners by addressing both academic and life barriers will impact the institution's completion rate, the community's productivity, and the economic health and well-being of these students. This tactic will focus on developing and institutionalizing streamlined programs, services, and practices to connect at-risk students to the array of community college services, public benefits and pathway programs that exist. This work will be done in partnership with the United Way of East Central Iowa, and it supports the regional community goal to increase the number of financially stable households by 15 percent. This tactic builds from the KPACE Expansion Planning project and current successful best-practice programs at Kirkwood which include College Prep Block, Project START/FINISH, and KPACE. It aligns with the **Regional Leadership and Instructional Innovation** Initiatives.

**Developmental Programs.** To deal more effectively with the needs of underprepared students, the following strategies are under discussion: Assess effectiveness of the current placement model and cut scores for math, writing, reading and ELA; implement alignment by working with ACT; and make improvements or model changes based on data collected. Communicate placement model and plan for student success with regard to advising, testing, and mode of course delivery. Align curricula of developmental courses with the next course level, and design faculty professional development relevant to student success and competency completion. This tactic will be part of the **Instructional Innovation** Initiative.

**Define and communicate a college-wide mission and vision for Kirkwood's Regional Centers.** Kirkwood's regional centers are a long-term educational investment to our community partners and constituents. In order to ensure the success of this investment, a clear understanding of the services, stakeholders, goals and threats must be defined. A cross-functional college team is needed to share information, identify student populations, challenge assumptions, map student enrollment trends, plan comprehensive student services and identify specific goals for the centers and our community. This tactic aligns with the **Instructional Innovation, Program Effectiveness, Educational Delivery, and Regional Leadership** Initiatives.

These new tactics have been discussed with Kirkwood's administrative team and input has been invited from all Kirkwood employees. Leadership for these tactics will be determined by the Kirkwood Cabinet by September, 2013.

Kirkwood's **Learner Success Agenda** is updated quarterly and annual updates are posted at [www.kirkwood.edu/learnersuccessagenda](http://www.kirkwood.edu/learnersuccessagenda).