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I. History of Sierra College

Sierra College had its beginnings in 1882 as "Sierra Normal College" in Auburn and shared its early history with Placer High School. Tracing its birth from the establishment of Placer Junior College in 1936, it was not until the aftermath of World War II that enrollments began their consistent climb from a low point of 53 students in 1943. By 1961, when the main campus opened in Rocklin, 1500 students were enrolled in the new location. With the explosive growth of the student population in the 1960s and the region of Placer County in the 1980s, Sierra College continued to grow. Enrollments reached 10,000 in 1980 and by fall 2007 there were 20,742 students enrolled at the college.

Sierra College began offering classes in the Tahoe Truckee area as early as 1969, with an official district-owned campus opening in 2009. Since the college’s 50th anniversary in 1986, additional satellite campuses were opened at Roseville Gateway, and Nevada County, expanding the physical presence of the college even further in Placer and Nevada Counties. In 2004, voters approved local bond funding to make improvements to the Nevada County Campus (NCC) and Tahoe Truckee Campus.

Sierra College has a historic role in the community as an institution committed to the educational advancement of students in academic/transfer programs as well as career and technical education.

II. Introduction

In spring 2008 the Sierra Community College District renewed and refocused its commitment to program and institutional quality through the creation of a district wide strategic plan. As stated by the League of Innovation, we need to “…be ready for the changing ages and stages of learners, the flux in learners’ needs, ever more interesting and engaging technologies, our emerging role as the nexus of learning activity, our expanding role as learning entrepreneurs, and the imperative to connect and reflect.” The “2008 Plan” guided the district through its first structured attempts at integrated planning and resource allocation. As part of that new planning structure, each plan is updated every three years. The “2011-14 Plan” kept the spirit and most of the specifics of its predecessor, while streamlining strategies and updating key assumptions, source data, and goal metrics.

This version of the plan, “2015-18” presents the goals and strategic directions the District has determined will best serve our students and our community.

A. Purpose

The plan addresses the major demographic, educational and economic opportunities and challenges facing Sierra College over the next several years and creates a framework to establish goals, set priorities and provides benchmarks against which to chart our progress.
The plan is designed to serve as the foundation for all District planning efforts over the next three years. The strategic directions and consequent assessments contained herein are to guide and strengthen the decision-making process. Driven by the objectives of student success and improving student equity, this plan will allow the District to respond to future challenges and opportunities with more clarity and certainty than ever before. The plan summarizes the District’s role as an educational institution, the commitment to the community, and identifies unique assets and strengths. It serves also as a core document in the development and revision of the District’s other major planning documents.

III. Approach and Process

A. Approach

Sierra College values collaboration and facilitated leadership as key in its approach to successfully implement its shared governance processes. As a result, the District relied heavily its shared governance structure to provide feedback for the Strategic Plan framework and development. The District also has a strong commitment to a consensus model of operations. The goal is consensus from all constituencies throughout the development of the Strategic Plan. During the ACCJC site visit in 2014, Sierra College received a commendation regarding its approach to shared governance and decision making:

The team commends the College for its collaborative and inclusive culture. This culture was described in the Self Evaluation and echoed in interviews with Board Members, the Academic, Classified, Management and Student Senate leadership, as well as members of the Standard IV writing team which included all college constituencies including part-time faculty. The theme was also evident in comments in the two Open Forums. The College has a clear and thoughtful leadership and governance structure that encourages “ethical and effective leadership with the goal of ensuring college wide-participation in shared governance ultimately focused on maximizing and improving student learning.”

In 2008, a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President of Student Services, the Director of Finance, the Presidents of the Academic, Classified, Management and Student Senates, and the District research coordinator formed the first Strategic Plan Task Force, drawing input, drafting language, and disseminating plan details to their respective constituency groups, Strategic Council, the District’s executive team, and the Board of Trustees. Throughout the development of the Strategic Plan, the Planning Committee sought consensus from all constituencies, as well as community leaders. Their work and the robust dialog and guidance by shared governance groups resulted in a successful initial plan.

In 2011, the Strategic Council determined that most of the original plan was still effective and that a major revision was not called for. The Vice President of Instruction and the staff of the Research and Planning Office were tasked to provide a draft revision of the plan’s strategies and planning assumptions, which were accepted by the Strategic Council in December 2010.
Revision of the overall language of the plan was reviewed by governance groups and accepted by Strategic Council in May 2011.

B. Process of Revision

For the 2015 update, the Strategic Council determined that many of the Planning Assumptions and Key Trends were no longer valid and consequently a major revision was required. As in 2008, a Strategic Master Planning Taskforce—comprised of the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President of Student Services, the Vice President of Administrative Services, the Presidents of the Academic, Classified, Management and Student Senates, and the Dean of Planning, Research, and Resource Development—formed to draw input, draft language, and disseminate plan details to their respective constituency groups, Strategic Council, the District’s executive team, and the Board of Trustees.

As in previous Strategic Master Plans, the taskforce focused on achieving meaningful improvement in student learning and organizational effectiveness, while acknowledging our current facilities and resource limitations. The 2008-11 Strategic Master Plan was developed as part of package of strategies that are mostly still in use today:

- Develop a strategic planning framework with Student Learning Outcomes as a foundation
- Use program reviews as a critical strategic feedback tool.
- Establish a rubric to measure, assess and evaluate the health of existing programs and provide direction for future programmatic efforts.
- Define signature program areas in which the District will excel.
- Link internal self-assessment with external assessment measures using objective criteria, mutually agreed upon in advance.
- Implement a process of continuous quality improvement.
- Provide tools to enable all District constituents the ability to participate in the planning process and access to planning documents.

The 2015-18 Strategic Master Plan is written to integrate with the current Sierra College Master Plans—Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Technology Master Plans—budget development process, ePAR process, and program review.

Unlike in previous Strategic Master Plans, the development of this Strategic Master Plan resulted in more goals, but without specific strategies assigned to them. Instead, the SMP Taskforce is using the associated activities and metrics to outline specific goals and provide specific criteria by which progress can be measured.
IV. Vision/Mission/Core Values

In 2015, the District adopted a revised vision, mission and core values statement. These provide foundational direction to the district’s strategic planning initiative.

_Sierra College Mission Statement_

Sierra College provides a challenging and supportive learning environment for students having diverse goals, abilities, and needs interested in transfer, career and technical training, and lifelong learning. The College’s programs and services encourage students to identify and to expand their potential. Sierra College students are supported in developing the knowledge, skills and abilities to be fully engaged and contributing members of the community.

_Sierra College Vision Statement_

We will challenge ourselves and our community to become fulfilled citizens in a global environment by contributing to and engaging in the thoughtful application of knowledge guided by respect for others and the world in which we live.

_Core Values_

The following core values will establish our ethical principles and will guide our institutional decision-making.

Sierra College will:

1. Support and model excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity.
2. Provide the tools for continuing success in an ever-changing world.
3. Provide and demonstrate the value of an inclusive and equitable community.
4. Demonstrate collaboration in decision making.
5. Foster active citizenship in our community, our nation, and our world.
6. Create and nurture meaningful connections to our community.
7. Recognize that students are active participants in their education.
8. Support and demonstrate the sustainable use of all resources.
V. Planning Assumptions and Key Trends

A. Planning Assumptions

1. California’s economy has improved and is expected to grow at a moderate rate in the near future.
   a. Due to the state restructuring STRS & PERS liabilities, the districts STRS/PERS pension obligations will increase through 2020.
   b. Governor Brown will continue to favor the creation and expansion of categorical funds as opposed to strictly growing general fund monies.
2. The District will continue to operate as one college with multiple locations (Board Policy 2900).
3. The Rocklin Campus will continue to operate as a comprehensive college site.
4. The future of the two properties adjacent to the Rocklin Campus is uncertain.
   a. The board will continue to have an interest in using the properties for revenue generation.
   b. There is an interest in having a mixture of educational and revenue generating activities on the sites.
5. The Rocklin Campus infrastructure is near the end of its useful life and near maximum capacity.
6. No new permanent facilities will be available in the district within the next three years.
7. All permanent sites will provide at least one full transfer and one vocational program.
8. Programs and services at the Roseville Gateway site will be relocated when the lease expires.
9. Current High School graduation levels will remain flat for the next 3-5 years.
   a. Nevada County HS enrollments are in decline and are expected to do so for the near future.
10. In order to meet short-term growth, Sierra College may need to expand programs and services.
    a. Sierra College will continue to explore concurrent enrollment opportunities.
11. Sierra College will further explore alternatives to adult education.
    a. We will expand local partnerships with adult education, explore expanding non-credit offerings and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.
12. The demand for Distance Education courses will continue to increase.
13. Placer County population will grow 10% between 2014 and 2020 and 15% more between 2020 and 2030, adding approximately 100,000 residents in 16 years. Most of these new residents will be “in-migrants” from elsewhere in California.
14. The district must determine how to serve an additional 11,000 students expected in western Placer County by 2040.
    a. Sierra College will explore a variety of means to meet future growth, such as CSU partnership, partnership with other four year colleges/universities, or a new center.
15. In order to meet our infrastructure and growth needs, Sierra College will explore a local bond in 2016.
16. It is uncertain whether there will be a statewide education bond in 2016.
17. Further expansion of Tahoe Truckee may require dorms or other student housing options.
18. The student population in the Nevada County Campus service area will continue to decline.

B. Key Trends & Facts

- Placer County will continue to grow, but is no longer one of the most rapidly expanding counties in the state.
- Placer and Nevada Counties have the two highest rates of high school graduates, according to the US Census Bureau, but are 11th and 13th respectively in terms of the percent of the population with bachelor’s degrees or higher.
- Placer County has a slightly older than average population (50.2% less than age 40), but current RAND projections suggest Placer county will be proportionally younger (53.1% less than age 40) by 2050.
- Traditional student enrollment continues to make up the majority of the district headcount, close to 62% during Fall 2013.
- Placer County K-12 enrollments are expected to remain relatively flat for the next 2-3 years, but are expected to grow by about 10% by 2022-23.
- Nevada County K-12 enrollments have declined significantly in the past few years and are not expected to recover in the near future. California Department of Finance projects Nevada County K-12 students are projected to decline from 12,191 in 2013-14 to 11,261 in 2022-23.
- Nevada County will continue to have one of the most homogeneous populations in the state with only a gradual increase in non-white residents expected.
- Of the non-white residents of Nevada County, the Hispanic/Latino population will continue to experience the fastest growth.
- The California Economic Forecast states that, “Over the next five years, employment growth will be broad-based, with virtually all sectors increasing at an annual average rate of 2.5% or more. The fastest growth will be in construction, which will create jobs at a pace of 8.2% per year. In addition, professional services, leisure and hospitality, education and healthcare, financial activities, and transportation will also grow at rates of 3.5% or more.”
- Similar to Placer County, employment growth for Nevada County from 2013 to 2018 will focus on construction, leisure and hospitality, education and healthcare, professional services, and government.
VI. Strategic Goals

As result of its work, the Strategic Master Planning Taskforce determined that increasing the number of strategic goals to 6, but eliminating the numerous best reflects the intention of the district.

1. Goal 1: Achieve equitable access and increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities while maintaining high levels of academic integrity.

2. Goal 2: Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.

3. Goal 3: Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.

4. Goal 4: Meet and exceed external standards through an outcomes based framework for continuous quality improvement.

5. Goal 5: Modernize, revitalize and develop new facilities and infrastructure based on the current Facilities and Technology Master Plans.

6. Goal 6: Expand community partnerships and funding opportunities to support strategic goals and leverage resources.

VII. Strategic Planning Metrics

As in previous iterations of the Strategic Master Plan, Sierra College developed a set of “Strategic Planning Metrics” to measure its progress in achieving the above goals. The 2015-18 Strategic Planning Metrics will be developed as a joint effort of the Strategic Planning Taskforce and representatives of the Educational Effectiveness Committee during the Spring and Fall of 2015. The resulting metrics will be attached to the Strategic Master Plan as Appendix A.
Appendix A - Draft

1. Increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. Course success
         1. By location
      ii. Course retention
         1. By location
      iii. Student Persistence
         1. Term-to-Term
         2. Fall-to-Fall
      iv. Percentage of FT enrollment by Term
         1. By location
      v. Students completing 30 units
         1. By cohort
         2. As proportion of student population
      vi. CTE Certificate numbers and rates
      vii. Certificate and Degree numbers and rates
      viii. Transfer numbers and rate
      ix. Headcount
         1. By Location
      x. Full-time Equivalent Students (FTES)
         1. By Location
         2. By Program
      xi. Number of Applicants
      xii. Number of Applicants that Enroll
      xiii. Percent of students with a Student Education Plan (SEP)
      xiv. Financial Aid Recipients
         1. By aid type
      xv. Student/Counselor Ratio

2. Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. Course success and retention by group
      ii. Placement by group
      iii. Term GPA by group
      iv. 30 units in 2 years by group
      v. English 1A and Math D Completion by group
      vi. English 1A and Math D Completion by placement and group
      vii. ESL progression by language and group
      viii. Degree and Certificate completion by group
      ix. Transfer rate (<= 3 years) by group
3. Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. Number of activities offered
      ii. Participation rates
         1. SC4
      iii. FERC attainment
      iv. Number of EEO incidents
      v. Percentage of new employees who go through orientation
      vi. Develop a plan to evaluate current employee onboarding and training
      vii. PT participation in Planning and Assessment day
   viii. Staffing Levels
      1. By Type
      2. By Demographic characteristics
      3. Faculty FT/PT Ratio

4. Meet and exceed external standards through an outcomes based framework for continuous quality improvement.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. Develop a Title IX Compliance plan
      ii. ACCJC Accreditation
      iii. Finances
         1. Revenues
         2. Expenditures
         3. Operating Deficit/Surplus
         4. Fund Balance as % of Expense
         5. Credit Rating
      iv. Expand Planning and Assessment Day to non-instructional areas
         1. Program reviews completed
         2. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

5. Modernize and revitalize facilities and infrastructure based on the current Facilities and Technology Master Plans.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. Number of parking spaces
      ii. Student housing plan

6. Expand community partnerships and funding opportunities to support strategic goals and leverage resources.
   a. Associated Activities and Metrics
      i. 2016 Local Bond
      ii. Workforce Development
      iii. Foundation Finances
         1. Funds raised
         2. Number and Amount of Scholarships Awarded
3. Endowments
   iv. Community Events
      1. Lifelong Learning (OLLI)
         a. Enrollments
         b. Courses Taught
      2. Community Education
         a. Enrollments
         b. Courses Taught
         c. Revenue