



Vernon College

2021-2025 Strategic Plan

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Vernon College Strategic Plan

2021-2025

Board Member	Date of Term	Hometown
Dr. Todd Smith, Chair	2016-2022	Vernon, Texas
Bob Ferguson, Vice Chair	2018-2024	Vernon, Texas
Ann Wilson, Secretary	2018-2024	Vernon, Texas
Vicki Pennington	2016-2022	Vernon, Texas
Irl Holt	2018-2024	Vernon, Texas
James Brock	2020-2026	Vernon, Texas
Betsy Smith	2020-2022	Vernon, Texas

Date of Approval: February 10, 2021

Signed: 
Dr. Dusty R Johnston, President

Signed: 
Dr. Todd Smith, Board Chair

Reviewed and approved by the College Effectiveness Committee on January 29, 2021

Introduction

There exists a national focus on strategic planning and accountability for higher education. Vernon College (VC) ensures accountability through a long-range strategic planning process which aligns planning and resource allocation with the Vernon College Mission. The process is a cyclical and layered process of planning and evaluation to ensure institution-wide participation and a culture of success. A number of specific measures of student learning as well as numerous evidences of institutional effectiveness are incorporated in to the process.

The long-range strategic planning process at Vernon College is an evidence-centered infrastructure of assessment, planning, budgeting, and communication functions and activities which have been established to provide our evidence to answer the questions of accountability. The process is deliberate, systematic and emphasizes continuous input and evaluation by all members of the College community in order to spur educational change and institutional improvement. The infrastructure has been designed so that each individual component is valued, yet it is the sum of all the components that presents the desired status of college preparation and effectiveness.

The *Vernon College 2021-2025 Strategic Plan* document incorporates all components of the long-range strategic planning process to communicate the College's goals, objectives, initiatives, actions, assessment methods, outcomes, and the resource allocation process to internal and external constituents. Consistent review and approval, as well as availability of the document, provides the assurance of transparency and the opportunity for feedback by all constituents including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, administration, the Board of Trustees, elected officials, and the Vernon College service area.

Vernon College Mission

The Philosophy, Vision, Values, and Mission permeates all facets of Vernon College. They are annually reviewed and updated as needed by the College Effectiveness Committee prior to being presented to the Board of Trustees for review and adoption.

Philosophy

Vernon College is a constantly evolving institution, dedicated primarily to effective teaching and regional enhancement. With this dedication to teaching and to the community, the College encourages open inquiry, personal and social responsibility, critical thinking, and life-long learning for students, faculty, and other individuals within its service area. The College takes as its guiding educational principle the proposition that, insofar as available resources permit, instruction should be adapted to student needs. This principle requires both flexibility in instructional strategies and maintenance of high academic standards. Strong programs of assessment and accountability complement this educational principle. VC accepts the charge of providing a college atmosphere free of bias, in which students can exercise initiative and personal judgment, leading to a greater awareness of personal self-worth. It strives to provide every student with opportunities to develop the tools necessary to become a contributing, productive member of society.

Vision

Vernon College will promote a culture of success for our students and communities through learner-centered quality instructional programs and exemplary services.

Values

Vernon College promotes a culture of success through our shared values and commitment to:

- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Building Relationships
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Quality
- Student Success
- Teamwork

Our values define who we are and guide us in conducting our business every day. Our values are our morals – what are important to us at our college.

Accessibility - We strive to maintain open lines of communication and are available in person and/or electronically 24/7 for our stakeholders' convenience.

Accountability - With renowned integrity and ethical standing, we back our words and actions; support our product, community, and stakeholders; and are responsible, good stewards of our fiscal resources.

Building Relationships - We recognize the central importance of building human relationships. We understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. We engage people as partners and seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

Diversity - We embrace with sensitivity a wide range of cultures and ideas within our diverse environment, celebrating the differences among our faculty, staff, and students without regard to gender, age, or disabilities.

Inclusion – We recognize the important practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources.

Innovation - Employing forward-thinking and future-oriented methods, we strive to be at the forefront of designing new processes and methods that are flexible and creative.

Leadership - We strive to be leaders in our communities and to grow leaders for our college and our communities. Choosing to serve others takes hard work and some sacrifice. It involves being committed and acting responsibly. It reflects an awareness of the needs of others, acknowledgment that there will be challenges, and an enthusiasm for improving and creating new things. It demonstrates a desire to give back and to make a difference.

Quality - We strive to do our best with everything entrusted to us, and we take pride in the successful completion of the job.

Student Success - Every aspect of what we do adds value to the education of our students. We have established a foundation of teaching methods that work, and we set high standards of achievement.

Teamwork - We are the catalyst that transforms and inspires people to reach their greatest potential TOGETHER. We do this by developing targeted learning experiences that engage people, empower leaders, and accelerate team development within our college and our communities.

Mission

The mission of Vernon College is teaching, learning and leading. Vernon College is a comprehensive community college that integrates education with opportunity through our instructional programs and student support services by means of traditional and distance learning modes. Therefore, to fulfill its mission, the College will provide access, within its available resources, to:

- Career technical/workforce programs up to two years in length leading to associate degrees or certificates;
- Career technical/workforce programs leading directly to employment in semi-skilled and skilled occupations;
- Freshman and sophomore courses in arts and sciences, including the curricula leading to associate and baccalaureate degrees;
- Ongoing adult education programs for occupational upgrading or personal enrichment;
- Compensatory education programs designed to fulfill the commitment of an admissions policy allowing the enrollment of disadvantaged students;
- A continuing program of counseling and guidance designed to assist students in achieving their individual educational goals;
- Career technical/workforce development programs designed to meet local and statewide needs;
- Support services for educational programs and college-related activities;
- Adult literacy and other basic skills programs for adults; and
- Other programs as may be prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), such as *60x30TX*, or local governing boards in the best interest of postsecondary education in Texas.

Mission as adapted from the Texas Education Code, Sec. 130.003 (e).

Approved by College Effectiveness Committee September 25, 2020

Officially approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 14, 2020

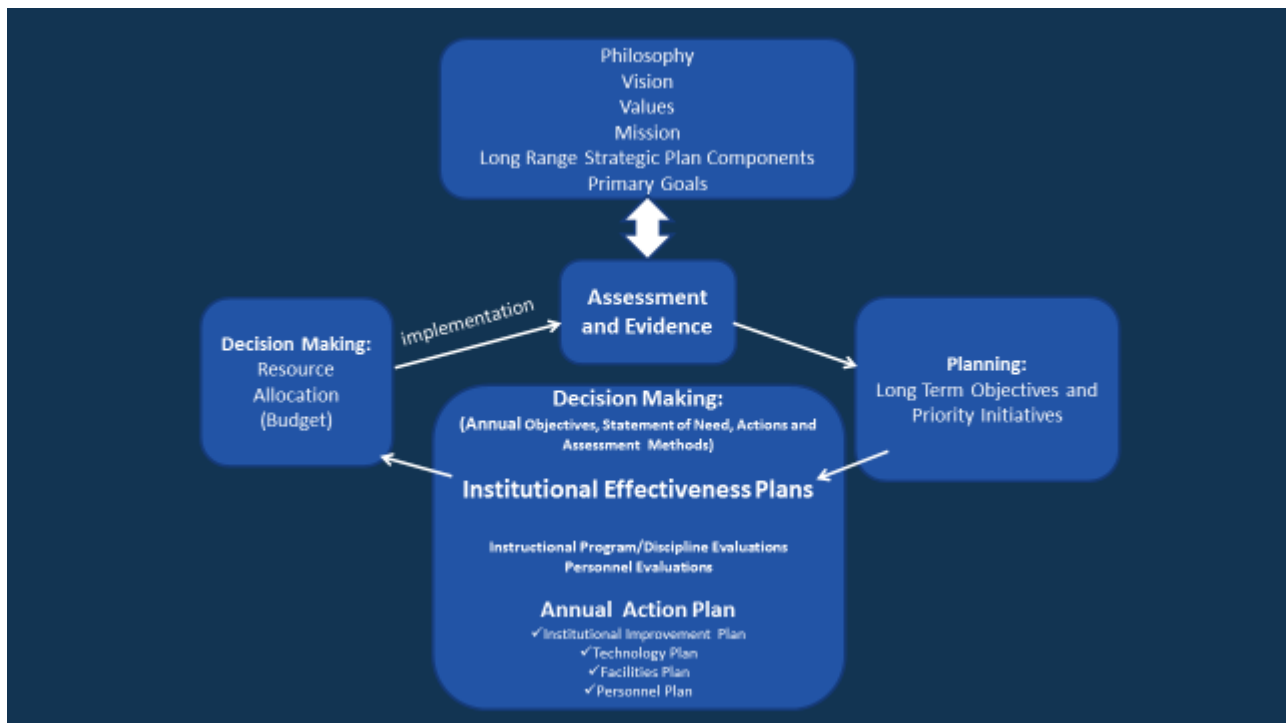
Goals and Action Plan

Vernon College Institutional Effectiveness

Vernon College is committed to continuous organizational improvement through an evidence-centered infrastructure of assessment, planning, budgeting, as well as communication functions and activities. Data resulting from assessment activities guides a research-based and focused approach to goal setting and decision making. To provide a framework for the planning process, the College has established a five-year planning cycle that sets institutional long-range goals and objectives based on review of the College's Philosophy, Vision, Values, Mission, and ongoing assessment such as the Key Performance Indicators of Accountability and related benchmarks. On an annual basis, the process continues when Primary Goals, Priority Initiatives, and objectives are selected to ensure a focused approach for planning and accountability from each component of the College.

The College Effectiveness Committee, comprised of members representing each area of the College, is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and ensuring completion of the entire planning and assessment process. The Administrative Team and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, under supervision of the President, coordinate the responsibility for the five-year and annual planning/evaluation processes, as well as subsequent follow-through and documentation of how assessment drives planning and how planning drives budgeting.

The elements of the formal planning and evaluation process include the following:



Primary Goals

A Primary Goal forms a part of Vernon College's strategy and acts as a motivating force as well as a measure of performance and achievement for those working at the institution. The Primary Goals are the overall medium or long-term goals of Vernon College and will align with the Mission of the College as well as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) compliance criteria and the Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan 2015-2030, *60x30TX*. They are reviewed annually by the College Effectiveness Committee, administration and the Board of Trustees, and every five years by internal and external constituents.

Primary Goals for 2021-2025

1. Vernon College will operate with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the students, Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff (programs, policies, procedures, processes, and practices).
2. Vernon College will allocate resources and implement processes for evaluation and planning to support the Mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services, as well as to respond to future challenges and opportunities (institutional effectiveness – planning and assessment).
3. Vernon College will identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results of educational programs, administrative support services, educational support services, and community/public service within its educational mission (planning and assessment including student learning outcomes).
4. Vernon College will promote a life of learning for its students, faculty, administration, and staff by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission (professional development, Quality Enhancement Plan, student engagement, continuing education, community outreach).
5. As called for by its mission, Vernon College will identify its constituencies and serve them in ways that meet the needs of our service area.

Approved by the College Effectiveness Committee on October 30, 2020

Officially approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 11, 2020

Long-Term Objectives

Vernon College Long-Term Objectives promote a culture of success to ensure the Mission of teaching, learning, and leading results in effective recruitment of students, retention of students, and certificate/degree completion or transfer by students. Long-Term Objectives are selected for a five-year span based on input from internal and external constituents, administration, and the Board of Trustees (with reference to the Vernon College Mission, assessment data, and internal and external factors affecting the institution.) These objectives are reviewed annually by the College Effectiveness Committee, administration and the Board of Trustees to ensure the College is maintaining a steady course.

Long-Term Objectives for 2021-2025

1. Enhance recruitment efforts to increase enrollment.
2. Improve retention, completion, and transfer rates of Vernon College students.
3. Allocate available funds to diligently utilize fiscal, physical, human, and technological resources.
4. Develop additional academic and career/technical program opportunities.
5. Increase student support services to meet the needs of the Vernon College service area.
6. Ensure opportunities for professional development and support for faculty and staff.
7. Create opportunities for community utilization of campus and learning centers.
8. Support appropriate physical facilities to ensure the College meets its stated mission.
9. Monitor and maintain security efforts on college campus and learning centers.
10. Provide the technical infrastructure, cybersecurity, and accessibility to adequately support student learning, institutional improvement, and employee functions.
11. Strengthen the College's planning and assessment activities to ensure student learning, accountability, and institutional improvement.
12. Communicate and build strategic alliances with local businesses and economic development partners to foster increased support of Vernon College's educational and economic benefits to the 12 county service area.

Approved by College Effectiveness Committee September 25, 2020

Officially approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 14, 2020

Priority Initiatives

Priority Initiatives could also be stated as "priority of initiatives." They are broad statements of intent that serve as extensions of the Mission, Primary Goals and Long-Range Objectives using assessment data, and internal and external factors that could affect the College, address and prioritize college-wide issues. Priority Initiatives demand allocation of resources, modifications of programs, policies, procedures, processes and practices, and commitment to accomplishment for the College to meet its purpose. Priority Initiatives are developed annually by the College Effectiveness Committee followed with review and approval by administration and the Board of Trustees.

Priority Initiatives for 2021-2022

1. Implement a centralized, unified, and organized recruitment and retention effort.
2. Improve the quality of educational and student support services to increase student learning, student retention, and certificate/degree completion or transfer by students.
3. Ensure the assessment for continuous improvement of general education, program, and student learning outcomes.
4. Implement the SACSCOC approved Quality Enhancement Plan that focuses on Success through Inquiry.
5. Support opportunities for professional development for all Vernon College employees through appropriate funding.
6. Provide fiscal, physical, human, and technological resources to accommodate current and future needs.
7. Enhance the technological infrastructure of the institution.
8. Sustain and intensify external fundraising to better support the College.
9. Strengthen the alumni base to support the College.
10. Ensure institutional accountability through effective strategic planning and assessment processes.

Approved by the College Effectiveness Committee on October 30, 2020

Officially approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 11, 2020

Institutional Effectiveness Plans

Institutional Effectiveness Plans at Vernon College articulate the purpose of a department, sub-unit or program, identify and assess expected outcomes, and document efforts of continuous improvement in support of the Vernon College Mission.

Components of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan

- Department, unit or program purpose in support of the Vernon College Mission

- Department, unit or program expected outcomes in support of the accomplishment of the Vernon College Mission
- Assessments used to measure expected outcomes
- Location of assessments
- Dissemination/discussion of assessments
- Assessment results
- Use of results for improvement of expected outcomes
- Time for inclusion in Annual Action Plan

Annual Action Plan

Annual Action Plan could also be called an “activity or operational” plan for each college component. The Annual Action Plan articulates objectives, responsibilities, needs and actions. The Annual Action Plan identifies, assesses and documents use of results in support of Vernon College Priority Initiatives and in response to Institutional Effectiveness Plans, Program and Discipline Evaluation, and other related assessment results. The Annual Action Plan ties the planning process to the budget.

Components of the Annual Action Plan

- ***Objective***
Objective is a target that is strived for with clearly defined desired results. Vernon College objectives serve as targets to the Priority Initiatives. Components of Vernon College (administrative services, admissions, records, recruiting and financial aid, instructional services, student services, and the President’s office) develop measurable objectives which become Annual Action Plans for the academic year.
- ***Statement of Need***
The Statement of Need is crucial to the Annual Action Plan because it documents the need for allocating resources for the selected objectives. As a part of the Annual Action Plan, the Statement of Need provides the opportunity for components of the College to justify the research and the necessity of the objective.
- ***Action***
Action is defined as a plan designed to accomplish or achieve a particular objective. Components of Vernon College will develop actions to accomplish objectives.
- ***Assessment Method***
As part of the Annual Action Plan, the Assessment Method is the process chosen to document, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, actions, attitudes and beliefs to identify and quantify (measure) strengths and weaknesses.
- ***Decision Making: Resource Allocation***
Planning and assessment at Vernon College will drive the budget. The Administrative Team is charged with the responsibility of prioritizing and compiling a Master Plan to determine resource allocation while continuing to take in to account assessment data as well as internal and external factors that could affect the College.

Instructional Program and Discipline Evaluations

Instructional Program and Discipline Evaluations are comprehensive reviews and assessments on a five-year cycle that include a mapping of course to program outcomes and the assessment procedures and processes for determining whether or not the outcomes have been met.

Examples of components of Instructional Program and Discipline Evaluations

- Program or discipline goal
- Learning outcomes including core objectives and course outcomes
- Relationship of the program or discipline to the Mission of the College
- Assessment of core objectives and course outcomes
- Course completion, success and grade distribution
- Effectiveness of distance learning courses
- Program completion
- Accreditation/licensure status
- Need such as relationship to other programs and justification for program continuation
- Review and assessment of developmental instruction
- Enrollment statistics
- Personnel (faculty and adjunct faculty) including percent of load taught by full-time and adjunct
- Curriculum review including course syllabi
- Educational support services
- Finance including revenue, expenses and contact hours
- Strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies identified based on program or discipline review

Personnel Evaluations

Employee performance evaluations are required periodically for every employee of Vernon College. The purpose of the evaluation is to constructively appraise job performance, encourage professional growth, and provide a means by which the employee is informed of how their work is perceived by the supervisor. Employees rating lower than average performance will warrant immediate developmental action.

Measures

Continuous improvement at Vernon College, as well as transparency, is assured through strategically selected measurement outcomes and benchmarks. Multiple methods are utilized to facilitate an efficient evaluation and assessment process. One example is the *Assessment/Report Calendar* and communication plan which is compiled by members of the College community and monitored through the standing committee process. Key Performance Indicators of Accountability (KPIAs) along with their related Benchmarks are another method utilized by Vernon College to monitor and communicate the progress and achievement of Vernon College goals, initiatives and objectives.

The Vernon College Key Performance Indicators of Accountability and related Benchmarks are indicators of institutional effectiveness identified and monitored through Student Success Data and College Effectiveness Committees.

Benchmarks are used to measure performance using specific indicators. The process of benchmarking helps to identify areas for needed improvement as well as best practices which will allow Vernon College components to prioritize when developing plans for making improvements or adapting best practices to increase some aspect of performance.

Budget Revenue and Expenditure for the academic year and previous years comparison.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) benchmarks compare Vernon College to the Texas Small College Consortium.

Continuing Education contract training courses for business and industry as well as funded contact hours.

Course Completion Success reviews Fall and Spring total course enrollments, total unduplicated students, courses completed with an "A, B, C or P" and the percent of course completion. The Career and Technical programs placement rate is also a part of this KPIA.

Enrollment includes credit, dual credit, funded non-credit, and non-funded non-credit students.

Financial Aid reports total aid awarded and disbursed including Pell Grants, student loans and scholarships.

FTE Student / FTE Faculty is a ratio of faculty as reported on the THECB CBM 008 (Faculty Report) and all undergraduate full time student equivalents calculated on 15 semester credit hours.

Graduation, Persistence and Retention compares cohort years of Vernon College first time-full time students with Texas Small Community Colleges and all Texas Community Colleges.

Licensure/Certification is the average rate for all Vernon College programs as compared to Texas Small Community Colleges and all Texas Community Colleges.

Milestones/Success Points are under development by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to measure and award points for the performance of institutions' efforts to increase the rate of student progression and achievement. *A Primer on Success Points* provides the most current information regarding the process.

Percent of Contact Hours Taught illustrates the contact hours taught in Fall semesters by full-time and part-time faculty.

Placement and Completion highlights the Career and Technical programs placement rate over a three year period.

Service Area High School Students who go to College includes total high school graduates from the Vernon College service area, the number who attended college, and of those attending college - the number who chose Vernon College in the Fall semester following graduation.

Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) benchmarks compare Vernon College to national participating community colleges with less than 4500 students.

Transfer is a comparison of Vernon College, Texas Small Community Colleges and all Texas Community Colleges first time students who complete an award at the two-year institution or transfer to a four-year institution.

The **Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan 2015-2030, 60x30TX**, charges institutions of higher education with participation in statewide goals and measurement objectives. Vernon College shares in this process through institutional specific goals, objectives and initiatives related to participation, completion, marketable skills, and student debt counseling. Evidence of institution and statewide results are provided through the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board Accountability Report and related publications.