

Strategic Plan

Arkansas State University Mid-South 2022-2025



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
MID-SOUTH

Planning Narrative

The Arkansas State University Mid-South 2022-2025 Strategic Plan represents the culmination of an eighteen-month process that began at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and concludes as the college absorbs and builds upon the lessons of the past two years. Led by the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Committee, this process has expanded to include all faculty and staff, input from students and community stakeholders, and focused support from additional committees and working groups.

The planning process consisted of three broad phases: Assess, Design, and Build. The initial Assess phase entailed a review of the previous strategic plan and a data-gathering effort that was extended, due to the committee's interest in gaining insights from knowledge gained during the Fall 2021 semester's disruptions of the previous academic year. After reviewing the previous plan, as well as available data, the committee determined additional data needs and established an emphasis on measurable objectives and sustainability in developing the new plan. The committee members gathered data from the employer and labor market, as well as information from a student survey conducted specifically for the planning effort. The committee then drafted the four strategic priorities and determined appropriate methods for engaging the rest of our campus in developing both objectives and assessment mechanisms.

Moving into the Design Phase, the committee held a campus-wide, strategic-planning kickoff meeting, including a survey for faculty and staff, in November of 2021. This was followed by a series of four open forums in the following weeks, and in Spring 2022, where all faculty and staff were invited to discuss each priority in smaller focus groups and propose measurable objectives. The conversations arising from these forums provided excellent feedback, while allowing faculty and staff to evaluate the changes we have experienced as a college. In addition, our Chancellor hosted a series of "fireside chats," which while providing insights for the planning process, were more informal conversations that helped faculty and staff reconnect, share their everyday work experiences, and propose new ideas to improve our college and better serve our students.

Finally, in April through July of 2022, the committee worked to finalize measurable objectives for each Strategic Priority. The Academic Assessment Committee also provided ideas and guidance in the development of Key Performance Indicators for Assessment Plans. In July, the committee completed the Assessment Plans and approved the whole of the Strategic Plan in its final form. The planning process leads to an ongoing Management phase, in which the committee will assess the college's progress annually by reviewing KPI reports and Operational Plans from the previous academic year.

Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Strategic Priority #1: Relevant, Accessible, High-Quality Education

Objectives:

- We will develop and provide high-value workforce programs and high-quality transfer degrees relevant to regional labor market demand.
- We will use creative and targeted marketing solutions to improve awareness of the college and promote program growth.
- We will implement flexible learning opportunities and assess current initiatives to enhance both in-person and online learning.
- We will expand opportunities for community engagement through assessment of local needs and the development of workforce training and community education initiatives.

Strategic Priority #2 Success through Responsiveness

Objectives:

- We will engage students, faculty, staff, and community partners to understand strengths, identify opportunities for improvements, and implement strategies designed to move our college and community forward.
- We will promote co-curricular educational activities that strengthen the relationship between instruction, student support, and community engagement.
- We will provide campus life opportunities, student services, and educational experiences that reflect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of our community.
- We will sustain and enhance effective practices in admissions, advising, and career services to support each step of a student's journey.

Strategic Priority #3 Community and Workforce Development

Objectives:

- We will advance workforce development through increased regional employer engagement and partnerships.
- We will serve the community through lifelong learning, civic engagement, and opportunities to enhance cultural and global awareness.
- We will produce employable graduates with the knowledge and essential skills desired to support regional workforce needs.

Strategic Priority #4: Culture of Growth and Engagement

Objectives:

- We will develop a culture of engagement that encourages employee participation in activities that promote and support our college and community.
- We will offer quality professional development to support a high level of performance and cultural competence for all employees.
- We will retain employees by promoting a positive work culture with an emphasis on open communication and transparency.
- We will recruit employees by strategically promoting our college to attract a diverse population reflective of our campus and community.

Assessment Plans

Strategic Priority #1: Relevant, Accessible, High-Quality Education

1. We will develop and provide high-value workforce programs and high-quality transfer degrees relevant to regional labor market demand.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Program Credit Hour Enrollment
- Program Completions
- Labor Market Demand for Workforce Programs from EMSI Analyst
- Transfer Rates for First-Time Entering Degree-Seeking Students
- Inventory of Program Additions, Modifications, and Improvements

Description:

Program viability and growth are important measures of success in this area. KPIs for this objective will draw from IPEDS and state productivity funding measures. However, assessment for this plan will take on a program-specific focus whenever possible. Effectively assessing this objective also requires reference to labor-market data and regional trends. Program modifications and improvements may include the addition of related, non-credit training adjustment of program requirements, in order to better align with student needs, and significant improvements in equipment or infrastructure.

2. We will use creative and targeted marketing solutions to improve awareness of the college and promote program growth.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Credit Hour Enrollment and Completions in Targeted Programs
- Enrollment in Targeted Non-Credit Programs
- Interactions with Targeted Services
- Website Traffic on Pages Linked through Advertising and Social Media

Description:

Assessment of this objective seeks to measure the impact of marketing strategies on the program or initiative in focus. This includes enrollment in both for-credit and non-credit programs. Website traffic, social media engagement, and advertisement clicks will also be used to provide data to support marketing efforts. These KPIs resemble those in SP1 Objective 1, but with a particular focus on understanding how marketing efforts draw stakeholder interest and promote growth.

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3. We will implement flexible learning opportunities and assess current initiatives to enhance both in-person and online learning.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Credit Hour Enrollment in Short-Term, Hybrid, and Alternate Delivery Courses
- Student Success Rates in Short-Term, Hybrid and Alternate Delivery Courses
- Percentage of Online Courses Passing Quality Matters Evaluation
- Percentage of Courses Assessed under the Current Academic Assessment Plan
- Interactions with New, Expanded, and Online Student Support Services

Description: Assessment measures for this objective include enrollment and success rates in short-term, hybrid, and alternate delivery formats. We will monitor these results, while ensuring that flexible delivery is coupled with effective training and oversight. Quality Matters and related effectiveness initiatives, such as the Academic Assessment Plan, will demonstrate an appropriate level of accountability. Quantifying student interactions with targeted support measures will also enhance understanding of ways that new developments and online options for student services impact student success.

4. We will expand opportunities for community engagement through assessment of local needs and the development of workforce training and community education initiatives.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Workforce Training Courses Conducted
- Community Education Courses Offered
- Enrollment in Community Education Courses
- Community Engagement Initiatives and Events

Description:

To assess this objective, we will track offerings and enrollment in community education and non-credit workforce training courses. We will also track engagement with local stakeholders by number of contacts, as well as by quality of outcomes. We will identify and recognize examples of civic engagement that demonstrate ways that the college is embracing its role as a community leader. This includes effective review and assessment of initiatives and events led by the college to ensure quality and to identify areas of need.

Strategic Priority #2: Success through Responsiveness

Objectives:

1. We will engage students, faculty, staff, and community partners to understand strengths, identify opportunities for improvements, and implement strategies designed to move our college and community forward.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Results Data from the Great Colleges Survey
- Students Satisfaction Data from Noel-Levitz, CCSSE, and Internal Surveys
- Number and Scope of Community and Employer Outreach Events
- Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement in Planning Efforts

Description:

This objective focuses on stakeholder satisfaction with their experience at ASU Mid-South and the effective use of stakeholder feedback to improve institutional practices. Assessment for this objective will identify specific examples of how student, faculty, staff, and community partner feedback shapes planning and process improvement. Additional indicators of success will be examples of student, faculty, staff, and community partners' direct involvement in planning efforts, as well as initiatives that promote community and employer engagement with the college.

2. We will promote co-curricular educational activities that strengthen the relationship between instruction, student support, and community engagement.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Counts of participants in Co-Curricular Activities
- Documented Assessment of Co-curricular Activities
- Evidence of the Incorporation of Co-Curricular Activities into Academic Curriculum

Description:

Assessment for this objective will focus on co-curricular activities, defined as course or program-related activities that engage student support services or community resources as elements of teaching and learning. As such, co-curricular activities promote active learning and help support students' academic and professional growth. Development, deployment, and effective assessment of these activities will be measures of success for this objective. This effort will help to ensure that co-curricular activities receive appropriate attention as a dynamic part of the student experience.

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3. We will provide campus life opportunities, student services, and educational experiences that reflect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of our community.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Participation in Active Student Organizations
- Usage Rates of On-Campus Student Support Resources
- Student Engagement with Campus Initiatives Supporting Diversity and Underserved Populations

Description:

Assessment for this objective will demonstrate the growth of campus life, use of student service resources, and engagement of diverse populations in each aspect of the student experience. The presence of viable campus organizations and extracurricular activities, as well as successful events that promote a vibrant student life on campus, will be signs of success for this objective. In addition, review of this objective will evaluate the effectiveness of campus activities and academic programs in engaging a diverse population in terms of race, gender, age, and the special populations identified under Perkins V.

4. We will sustain and enhance effective practices in admissions, advising, and career services to support each step of a student's journey.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Applicant to Enrolled Student Conversion Rates
- Time to Degree rates for Degree-Seeking Students
- 150% and 200% of Time Graduation Rates
- Evidence of Successful Job Placement or Career Enhancement after Graduation

Description:

Assessment for this objective will focus on the student experience in admissions, advising, and employment outcomes. Metrics in line with the state's productivity funding model, such as time to degree and gateway course completion, along with college and program-specific graduation rates, will be indicators of success for this objective. Finally, enhancements in the collection of employment-outcome data will be a sign of success for this objective, as will any improvements in quality of these outcomes over the course of the planning cycle. Due to the challenges associated with this effort, such as geography and other factors that hinder tracking, employment outcomes present a difficult, but important, opportunity for improved data collection.

Strategic Priority #3: Community and Workforce Development

Objectives:

1. We will advance workforce development through increased regional employer engagement and partnerships.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of Employer Focused Non-Credit Trainings Completed
- Enrollment and Completions in Workforce Training Programs
- Resources Attained through Employer Specific Partnerships and Trainings

Description:

Assessment for this objective will focus on employer engagement on multiple levels from collaboration, to training, to partnerships that provide resources and support. Successful initiatives, including instruction, employer-focused events hosted by the college, and other services that promote the college's role as a center for workforce development, will be markers of success for this objective. Enrollment and completion rates of for-credit programs in workforce-oriented fields are also key measures.

2. We will serve the community through lifelong learning, civic engagement, and opportunities to enhance cultural and global awareness.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Enrollment in Community Education Courses
- Examples of the College's Participation in Area Civic Events
- Enrollment and Success of Non-Traditional and Underrepresented Learners in both For-Credit and Non-Credit Courses
- Programming on Civic Engagement, Cultural Awareness, and Local, Regional, or Global Issues.

Description:

Assessment for this objective supports the college's role as a community leader and as a center for community-focused activities. Measures of success for this objective reflect the college's commitment to the traditional role of higher education institutions as centers of lifelong learning and cultural engagement. This includes the college offering and participating in community events, as well as ensuring that learners of all ages and backgrounds have access to a rich array of educational opportunities and community activities.

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3. We will produce employable graduates with the knowledge and the essential skills desired to support regional workforce needs.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Success of Graduates on Key Assessments such as CRC and Industry Specific Examinations
- Successful Course Assessment and Program Review Practices
- Improved Tracking and Student Success for Employment Outcomes Following Graduation

Description:

Assessment of this objective evaluates the college's ability to produce employable graduates and track graduate data, as students use their newly earned credentials to advance their careers. Efforts, through the reporting of Perkins V data, are an example of approaches to better tracking of graduate success. Measures, such as the Career Readiness Certificate and industry-specific credentialing examinations, demonstrate student achievement and are recognized by employers. This objective reflects the college's commitment, both to support student attainment of recognized credentials and to track student outcomes, in order to better understand the college's impact. Due to the challenges associated with this effort, such as geography and other factors that hinder tracking, employment outcomes present a difficult, but important, opportunity for improved data collection.

Strategic Priority #4: Culture of Growth and Engagement

Objectives:

1. We will develop a culture of engagement that encourages employee participation in activities that promote and support our college and community.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Count and Participation Rate for Employee Focused Activities
- Examples of College Led Activities that Support Community Engagement
- Internal and Third-Party Surveys of Employee Satisfaction

Description:

Assessment of this objective will support growth and sustainability of employee engagement in campus activities and in the community that ASU Mid-South serves. Here, the goal of these measures is to ensure that the college is promoting these efforts and is sustaining an environment wherein employees see engagement in these activities as a positive and worthwhile experience. The college encourages leaders to take initiative in providing opportunities for faculty and staff to build relationships, both within the college and in the wider community.

2. We will offer quality professional development to support a high level of performance and cultural competence for all employees.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Participation in Employee Professional Development Offerings
- Participation Rate for Employee Training related to Communication and Cultural Competence
- Internal Assessments of Employee Satisfaction with Professional Development Offerings
- Implementation of Initiatives that Support Employee Onboarding and Leadership Development

Description:

Assessment of this objective focuses on the number, reach, and quality of professional-development opportunities. The core expectation is that the college will provide quality programming, or will connect employees to quality programming, that supports professional growth and leadership development. This objective also targets internal processes that prepare new employees and promote knowledge-sharing among faculty and staff members.

3. We will retain employees by promoting a positive work culture with an emphasis on open communication and transparency.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Results Data from the Great Colleges Survey
- Consistent Communication Regarding Campus Initiatives, Events and Developments
- Effective Operational Planning and Sharing of Results
- Faculty and Staff Retention Rates
- Employee Familiarity with Campus Resources

Description:

Assessment for this objective applies a range of measures to better inform the institution about the quality of work culture at the college. While acknowledging that workplace culture is a challenge to quantify, this plan assesses the objective by combining survey data, evidence of employee engagement in planning, evidence of effective internal communication, and employee retention rates. This holistic approach leverages the strategic plan to promote administrative accountability and transparency.

4. We will recruit employees by strategically promoting our college to attract a diverse population reflective of our campus and community.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Comparison of faculty and staff diversity with that the college's student population
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives and Activities
- External and Internal Survey Results
- ASU System Scorecard Data on Employee Demographics

Description:

Assessment for this objective provides supporting data to better understand the college's success in attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff. As a higher education institution with a majority-minority student population, ASU Mid-South will regularly observe ways that the college's employee diversity compares to peer institutions, as well as to the regional population. These measures also allow college leaders to understand whether employee recruitment and retention initiatives are impactful across demographics.