



Strategic Goals Review

Prepared for Estrella Mountain Community College

Community College Executive Forum

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EAB's Approach to Reviewing Strategic Goals

Rationale and Methodology

Components of Impactful Strategic Goals

As the higher ed market becomes increasingly volatile, it is imperative that community colleges develop and implement impactful strategy that advances institutional success and sustainability. In response to EAB partners' desire to create transformational strategy, the Community College Executive Forum has developed a Strategic Goals Review, which assesses partners' top-line strategic goals.

Informed by the Forum's research on institutional strategy, the review assesses six components of impactful strategic goals:

- **Future Focus:** Extent to which the strategic goals take into account the changing landscape within and outside higher education and whether goals make explicit reference to the institution's efforts to adapt and innovate. The most successful strategy is informed by future-looking trends and projections, and seeks to meet the needs of tomorrow's students, employers, and communities.
- **Market Alignment:** How well the institution's strategy reflects external and environmental information. In particular, market alignment requires a thorough evaluation of the labor market, demographic, economic, and competitive landscapes, and seeks to craft a strategy that is informed by these signals.
- **Trade-Offs and Prioritization:** extent to which strategic goals avoid vague or all-encompassing language in favor of direct and precise priorities. To be truly impactful, an institution's strategy must acknowledge the tradeoffs necessary to make progress.
- **Agility:** How conducive the strategy is to reassessment and revision. Given the high degree of change occurring across higher education, college strategy must be crafted with the explicit expectation that various assumptions, priorities, and initiatives may need to shift. Optimal strategy embeds opportunities for reevaluation in conjunction with continuous market and institutional scanning.
- **Differentiation:** How well the partner institution's strategy reflects a differentiated approach to serving students and their community. As competition grows, it is more important than ever that institutions craft and convey unique value propositions to future students and employer partners.
- **Actionability:** Extent to which the partner institution's strategic goals easily map onto actions that achieve near- and long-term progress. Successful strategy balances an aspirational vision with a plan of attack that engages campus stakeholders.

Considerations for Using This Review

This assessment focuses on how your current goals compare to EAB's components of impactful strategic goals. It does not assess the likelihood of reaching a given goal or the appropriateness of a goal for a given institution.

How to Use This Review

This document can help you and your team:

- Evaluate prior plan goals at the beginning of a strategic planning process
- Adapt and refine draft goals during a strategic planning process
- Benchmark current goals against other institutions in your region

Overview of Strategic Goals Assessed

Rationale and Methodology

Estrella Mountain Community College's Strategic Goals

Super Goals:



- Super Goal 1: Increase the number of Graduates/Completers by 25% with equity by Academic Year (AY 2023)
- Super Goal 2: Achieve an Annualized Enrollment Growth Rate of 3% with Equity by FY 2023

Key Planning Areas:

1. Access (Recruitment and Outreach)
2. Onboarding (Matriculation, Academic Planning, Enrollment)
3. Retention (Scheduling, Communication, Support Activities)
4. Completion (Career, Workforce, Upskilling, Transfer)



Strategic Goals Assessment Summary

How Your Goals Align with the Components of Impactful Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal Component	Definition	Assessment	Key Observations
Future Focus	Makes explicit reference to the students, community, workforce, and institution of the future and how the strategy outlined will produce future success		While some of Estrella Mountain Community College’s strategic goals make reference to future-looking trends (e.g., “Integrating the MakerSpace into 10 classes”), they lack an overall emphasis on the future sector, policy, and economic trends that will likely impact the institution going forward.
Market Alignment	Addresses employer needs, external partnerships (both within and outside of higher education), and labor market trends		<p>For the most part, Estrella Mountain Community College’s strategic goals do not address workforce alignment and preparation beyond a surface level. To that end, we encourage partners to craft strategic goals that directly reference local labor market, population, and economic trends and partnerships. Adding this information will ensure that Estrella Mountain Community College adapts to the changing market to best serve their students and community.</p> <p>Use labor market and state funding data to drive conversations about how the college’s strategy can be in sync with the broader political, economic, and social environment in Arizona.</p>



Strategic Goals Assessment Summary

How Your Goals Align with the Components of Impactful Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal Component	Definition	Assessment	Key Observations
Trade-Offs and Prioritization	Avoids overly vague language and explicitly or implicitly conveys prioritization of certain initiatives or efforts		<p>The specificity outlined in Estrella Mountain Community College’s strategic goals reflect a high degree of prioritization and decision-making. The strategic goals outline specific prospective student populations (e.g., high school students) to recruit, establish clear metrics for institutional improvement (e.g., increasing the number of students eligible for Pell year-round), and target specific aspects of the student experience to be improved (e.g., increasing student satisfaction ratings).</p> <p>As a result, the strategic goals provide a clear picture of the institution’s priorities and avoid the vague and generic language used in many strategic plans. This precision contributes to concrete actions and long-term progress.</p>
Agility	Establishes a plan for periodic assessment and revision of strategic initiatives; embraces change		<p>Recognizing the volatility within higher education and the larger marketplace and creating strategy that is responsive to these market shifts is critical for institutional sustainability. Some of Estrella Mountain Community College’s strategic goals explicitly acknowledge the rapidly changing landscape and outline an institutional response in advance (e.g., “Identifying Data Needs” section).</p> <p>To further increase agility, we recommend embedding an explicit commitment to periodic reassessment and flexibility (e.g., semi-annual goals review). This will not only prepare leaders to adopt a flexible mindset but will also help establish a culture on campus that is equipped for—rather than fearful of—significant change and disruption.</p>

Strategic Goals Assessment Summary

How Your Goals Align with the Components of Impactful Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal Component	Definition	Assessment	Key Observations
Differentiation	Conveys the unique value proposition of the institution, and differentiates the institution from its regional competitors		<p>When compared with other regional competitors', Estrella Mountain Community College's strategic goals are somewhat differentiated. While competitors share many of the same broad strategic goals, because of the high degree of prioritization and specificity built into the strategic objectives, it is apparent to a reader how Estrella Mountain Community College plans to establish an institution dedicated to serving students.</p> <p>Embedding aspects of agility and an orientation toward future trends will help to ensure that Estrella Mountain Community College's strategy stands out from regional competitors. Use the strategic goals in the competitor comparison (page 9) as reference points, so priorities and objectives outlined in Estrella Mountain Community College's strategic plan are unique from its competitors'.</p>
Actionability	Highlights specific actions that the institution can take to make both short- and long-term progress on goals		<p>The specificity of Estrella Mountain Community College's strategic goals is generally complemented by actionable recommendations for improvement. It is easy to envision how many of the outlined strategic goals could be cascaded throughout the institution to generate meaningful action.</p>

Competitor Comparison

Strategic Goals at Three Regional Competitors

Estrella Mountain Community College	Glendale Community College	Gateway Community College	South Mountain Community College
Increase the number of Graduates/Completers by 25% with equity by Academic Year (AY 2023).	Increase Student Enrollment with equity from 14,374 to 15,811 by Fall 2024.	Increase student enrollment by 4% as measured through a. Credit/Non-credit headcount b. Full-Time Student Equivalency (FTSE)	Utilize a systemic approach to recruitment, college readiness and retention with a focus on success, graduation and transfer.
Achieve an Annualized Enrollment Growth Rate of 3% with Equity by FY 2023.	Increase headcount of the new-student fall cohort with equity from 3,395 to 3,735 by Fall 2024.	Increase number of part-time students making satisfactory academic progress within 2 years by 2%.	Implement a comprehensive student development framework to enhance the student experience.
Access (Recruitment and Outreach) Increase the number of students successfully completing (C or better) All CPD Curriculum from 89% to 95% by 12/2021. Onboarding (Matriculation, Academic Planning, Enrollment)	Increase student successful course completion with equity from 62% to 72% by Fall 2024.	Increase transfer rate by 2%.	Develop and enhance programs, services and resources to foster student success.
Retention (Scheduling, Communication, Support Activities) Increase scholarship funding (defined as direct financial and in-kind donations) from an average of \$75,000/year to \$250,000/year by June 30, 2022.	Increase fall-to-fall student retention with equity of the new-student cohort from 54% to 64% by Fall 2024.	Increase monetary and in-kind resources to the college by 4%.	Create civic engagement and global awareness opportunities to support student success.
Completion (Career, Workforce, Upskilling, Transfer) Increase the number of students who have a personal plan for self-care from 0% to 20% by May 2022		Increase retention of students from high school programs into GateWay by 2%.	Integrate Strengths and Wellbeing learning opportunities into the student experience.

Source: https://www.gccaz.edu/sites/default/files/docs/strategic-planning/8142-gcc-strategicplan-2021-2024-final_2.pdf;
https://www.gatewaycc.edu/sites/gwc/files/docs/20171011_strategic_plan_web2.pdf;
<https://www.southmountaincc.edu/sites/default/files/docs/planning-research-development/876-strategicplan-2016-20.pdf>.

Additional Strategic Planning Resources

Strategic Cabinet Resource Center

In an increasingly volatile higher ed landscape, cabinet members are no longer tasked only with running an efficient department and successfully completing transactional tasks that keep the ship afloat; they now have to look up and think strategically about where their department and institution is heading. However, this is a new way of doing business for cabinets, and many are unsure of their roles and how to go about fulfilling them.

To meet these challenges, cabinet members must develop new strategic thinking skills, lead change across campus, and build infrastructures that support sustainable strategic transformation. To guide cabinet members in this shift in thought and responsibility, these expert insight pieces and toolkits guide cabinets through each step of this process of transformation.

Revising Strategy in the Wake of COVID-19

With uncertainty only growing around the future of the sector, the relevance of our pre-COVID plans is fast fading. However, we can't afford to wait another year before finalizing and implementing bold strategic moves. In fact, revisiting and revising institutional strategy now is perhaps the most important step in ensuring long-term sustainability for our institutions.

To assist our partners in revising their strategy, we have developed a hands-on Market-Informed Strategy Pivot framework and workshop facilitated by senior EAB experts, and this resource includes some of the top-line lessons.

Craft a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Roadmap

Many community college leaders have turned to Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) as the solution to their enrollment issues. However, SEM plans at community colleges have come to encompass a laundry list of hopes, goals, and initiatives that colleges would like to accomplish without accounting for resource availability.

In order to achieve financial sustainability, community colleges must evaluate external and future influences, craft enrollment strategy that articulates institutional priorities, and allocate specific resources to strategies that achieve enrollment goals.

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Framework

As part of the roadmap above, this template guides college leaders through the most critical planning steps. The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Framework assists you in developing a holistic understanding of your enrollment environment and ready-to-present strategy that is goal-orientated, actionable, measurable, and aligned with institutional priorities.



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