

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
2022-26 NCCCS Strategic Plan Final Report**

Background

In October 2022, the State Board of Community Colleges adopted a four-year strategic plan, [*Leading Through Change: 2022-2026*](#), designed to guide the decisions and actions of the North Carolina Community College System in support of the state's 58 community colleges and the more than 600,000 students they serve. Developed with broad input from colleges, trustees, and other partners, the plan reflects a collective commitment to ensuring the system remains an engine for economic growth and a gateway to meaningful careers for all North Carolinians.

The plan is anchored by five overarching goals:

- 1) Recruiting and retaining faculty and staff
- 2) Strengthening enrollment
- 3) Supporting student success
- 4) Advancing economic and workforce development
- 5) Improving system funding and effectiveness

Each goal is supported by objectives, strategies, and key performance indicators (KPIs), while annual implementation plans translate the broader vision into actionable priorities and tactics. Together, these frameworks ensure that the system can remain both ambitious in its aspirations and responsive to immediate needs.

Plan Progress

Since the adoption of the plan in late 2022, the system has made measurable progress across all five goals. Key takeaways from the report are included below.

- **Goal One (Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention)**

Faculty and staff salaries grew faster than regional and national averages, and retention rebounded from pandemic-era declines. However, compensation remains less competitive than regional and national benchmarks, and turnover continues to be higher among part-time employees. This distinction matters, as part-time employees represent more than half of the system's instructional workforce and are especially critical to the delivery of workforce continuing education programs, which draw on current industry professionals, healthcare practitioners, skilled tradespeople, and other working experts as instructors.

- **Goal Two (Enrollment)**

Since the height of the pandemic (Fall 2020), both FTE and student headcount enrollment have increased by 23%, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and outpacing national community college enrollment growth. Dual enrollment has been an important source of growth, while online and hybrid learning have become increasingly central to how students access instruction. Enrollment gains have been realized across the system, among colleges of all sizes and those serving both urban and rural communities.

- **Goal Three (Student Success)**

First-year progression/persistence rates have reached their highest level in a decade, and curriculum completion rates have maintained their upward trajectory, with growth – driven primarily by dually enrolled students – accelerating post-pandemic. College-level English course completion rates are still down from pre-pandemic levels but have begun to rebound, while Math/Science completion rates have remained relatively stable.

- **Goal Four (Economic and Workforce Development)**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways are producing more completers and meaningful economic returns, with recent earnings meeting or exceeding average statewide living wage thresholds across most colleges. The system's workforce and economic development programs are also reaching more students, clients, and businesses, with service to individuals at an all-time high and employer engagement far exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

- **Goal Five (System Funding and Effectiveness)**

The system secured significant new public and private investment and, with the adoption of Propel NC, is modernizing how North Carolina funds its workforce development programs, creating closer ties between what colleges teach and the high-demand fields driving our state's economy. State investment in North Carolina's community colleges is growing, with gains continuing to be realized through the adoption of Propel NC.

Contact(s):

Dr. Kimberly Gold

Chief of Staff

Goldk@nccommunitycolleges.edu