



Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Dalton State College Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Vision

Dalton State will deliver a transformational education by engaging the unique perspectives of a diverse student population to create sustainable solutions that improve our community and world.

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Dalton State is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097; telephone 404-679-4501) to award associate and bachelor’s degrees.

President's Message

Strategic Planning, when executed correctly, is one of the most critical activities of an organization. Planning in general is important. Of course life does not always go according to plan, but without a plan we are just wandering. COVID-19 certainly demonstrated to us all this spring how plans can change due to forces beyond our control. Nevertheless, we can adapt to the new circumstances while keeping our eyes on the destination we established for ourselves in our plan -- when there is a plan.

Whether we are on campus or operating remotely, our intended destination remains the same as described in our Mission and Vision and Values statements. Our goals further clarify the things we will emphasize in our efforts to achieve our vision and fulfill our mission. We will work on many things over the next four years. But if we use our strategic plan correctly, it will guide our work and ensure we do not stray too far from our stated goals around Student Success, Academic Excellence, Responsible Stewardship and Community Engagement. As a result, four years from now I expect we will see improvements in our metrics including, for example, increased numbers of adult learners and increased numbers of graduates.

The development of this plan was a very robust process led by our tireless chair, Dr. Lorraine Gardiner. The full list of participants in the Strategic Planning Committee and the Subcommittees is included at the end of this document and they all deserve our gratitude. With representatives from a wide array of areas of the College, we were able to simultaneously focus on the specific areas of the plan and explore how these areas overlap and complement each other. Many additional internal and external stakeholders contributed their suggestions along the way. Dalton State is indebted to every person who participated in any way in the development of this plan. Once again, I was overwhelmed by the willingness of our employees, students and community supporters to engage in this work with us.

Together, we "will deliver a transformational education by engaging the unique perspectives of a diverse student population to create sustainable solutions that improve our community and world."



Margaret H. Venable, Ph.D.
President

Introduction

Dalton State College, as an institution in the University System of Georgia (USG), has updated and revised its strategic plan to align with USG strategic priorities and in accordance with the needs of our stakeholders. The USG strategic plan recognizes the importance college degrees play in improving the lives of Georgians and calls for increases in the number of degrees awarded. As a Hispanic Serving Institution with a large percentage of first-generation students, Dalton State has the opportunity to transform our students' lives through education. Further, we recognize the need for flexibility and focus in curriculum and degrees in order to provide students with essential knowledge and competencies valued by their future employers. We seek to increase the number of degrees awarded, support our students inside and outside the classroom, and reduce impediments to their timely degree completion.

The USG and Dalton State have a strong commitment to providing an affordable education and strive to reduce the total cost of education. We work closely with our students to help them make informed decisions about student loans so they are not unduly burdened with debt. Dalton State continues to identify cost savings and improves process efficiencies as well as seeks external funding to provide a high-quality education to our students at the lowest cost possible.



Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Development

The Dalton State College Strategic Planning Committee began its work immediately after the USG approved its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan on November 12, 2019. The group's initial tasks focused on preparing draft strategic statements for presentation to stakeholder groups, planning the means of obtaining stakeholder input and performing an initial analysis of Dalton State's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). Once the committee approved the draft vision, values and goal statements, they constructed a survey to gather stakeholder input on these statements, the current mission and Dalton State's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A driving priority in the process was to obtain input from a broad range of key external and internal stakeholder groups.

The committee publicized its activities on campus using email, employee bulletins, the Dalton State Rage application notifications, the E-Beep student newsletter, Dalton State web site, table tents and stall wall announcements. President Venable sent emails to all employees and students encouraging them to complete the online survey. Communications to external stakeholders included personal invitation emails from President Venable, daltonstate.edu, newspaper releases, social media, regional newspaper and radio coverage, and the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce newsletter. External stakeholder groups included representatives from K-12 public and private schools in Dalton State's service area, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Dalton State College advisory boards, Dalton State College

Foundation board members, Dalton State alumni, area employers, Northwest Georgia Workforce Development iWorks Committee, the Dalton Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Believe Greater Dalton Education Leadership Council, Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce members, elected officials and the community at-large.

The announcements encouraged stakeholders to complete the online survey and attend face-to-face forums. The committee held separate forums for external stakeholders, faculty, and staff. Additionally, committee members attended Dalton State Faculty Senate and Student Government Association meetings to promote the survey and share the draft strategic statements. Two designated committee members recorded stakeholder responses during forums and made them available to the full committee. Committee members assigned one or more category codes to each forum and survey response in order to classify the input. Based on the analysis, the committee revised the draft vision, values, goals, and SWOT analysis to reflect insights provided by the stakeholders. The final version is being used by all Dalton State departments for planning their future activities.

Mission

Dalton State College provides a diverse student population with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to attain affordable baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees and certificates and to reach their personal and professional goals. Through challenging academics and rich collegiate experiences, we promote lifelong learning, active leadership and positive contributions in Northwest Georgia and beyond.

Vision

Dalton State will deliver a transformational education by engaging the unique perspectives of a diverse student population to create sustainable solutions that improve our community and world.



Values

Our core values are the essential enduring tenets which guide the Dalton State College community. They set forth what we believe and define how we should conduct our affairs. At the heart of these values is the welfare of our students.

Opportunity and Access for All

We believe all of our students can succeed and achieve their full potential.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

We empower faculty, staff, and students to engage in the pursuit of excellence and innovation in instruction, the acquisition of knowledge, and lifelong learning.

Diversity and Inclusion

We embrace inclusion and cultural diversity among faculty, staff, and students; we strive to be a place where the diversity of ideas, values, and perspectives is welcomed and nurtured.

Commitment to Service and Collaboration

We value a campus culture of service, engagement, and collaboration to advance the welfare of Northwest Georgia and beyond.

Respect and Collegiality

We are committed to the intentional creation of a community of learners based on respect, civility, courtesy, and appreciation of different points of view.

Culture of Accountability

We expect integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior in all of our relationships and hold one another and our institution accountable.

The following four goals provide our strategic emphases and will guide our actions. Every goal has multiple metrics that will either have targets based on USG expectations or set after first-year baseline measurements.

Goal 1: Student Success

We will increase student success through excellent teaching and developmental opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. (Linked to the [USG Strategic Plan 2024 Goal 1](#))

Description

We define and address student success holistically, to include academic achievement, well-being and their continued successes after graduation as lifelong learners.

Higher education transforms individuals into better citizens, and it benefits communities and prepares students for an ever-changing job market. Thus, it is critical to prioritize degree completion. The emphasis on challenging academics, rich collegiate experiences and active leadership requires that our programs embody the flexibility and adaptability we wish to see in our graduates. We will accomplish this through excellent teaching and developmental opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. We will provide new online learning opportunities, new programs and improved program availability. We will focus instruction to ensure academic programs meet the needs of the Northwest Georgia area and beyond.

We need to ensure students are not only academically prepared for college, but also socially and emotionally equipped to navigate the expectations of higher education. We need to improve the availability of student resources and funds to pay for college. Increasing student success will require collaboration with all stakeholders on the Dalton State campus as well as the community of Northwest Georgia.

Prioritizing diversity and inclusion is paramount to reaching our student success goal. We will identify and remove barriers to access and success for underserved student populations. We must also do more to ensure our delivery of programs and services meets the needs of adult and working students. And while we focus on Northwest Georgia, we will create sustainable solutions that improve our community and world.

Metrics

- Increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded.*
- Increase the number of adult-aged undergraduate students.*
- Increase first- and second-year retention rates.
- Increase student satisfaction scores.

Goal 1: Strategic Initiatives

Expand Momentum Approach practices*

The USG Momentum Year initiative consists of evidence-based practices that help undergraduate students attain their academic and personal goals while graduating in a timely manner. We will expand our implementation of Momentum Approach practices as one means of increasing student success.

Improve course and program availability*

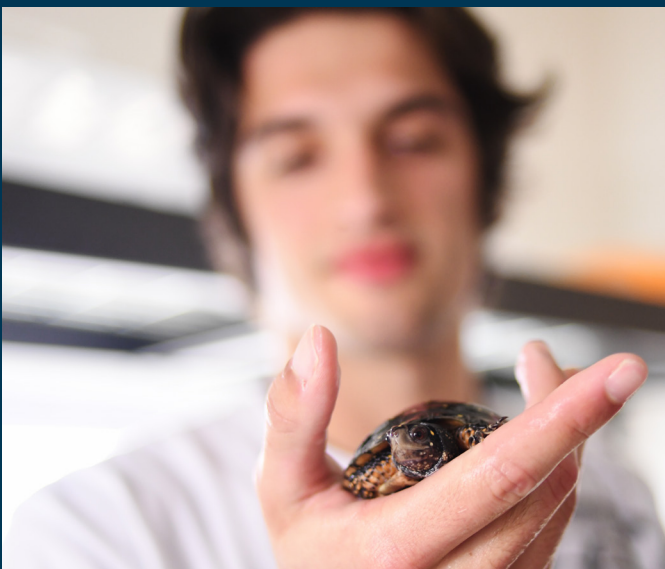
We will identify our students' access needs and employ a variety of means to make courses and programs more available.

Increase diversity and inclusivity in our campus community

We are committed to increasing diversity among our employees and students through our recruitment processes and campus-wide practices that contribute to a culture of inclusivity.

Increase support for first-generation students

A high percentage of Dalton State's student body consists of first-generation students (51% in Fall 2019). We will research and apply additional best practices to increase our support of these students.



Goal 2: Responsible Stewardship

We will continue to ensure access and affordability for students by containing costs and increasing efficiency across the college. (Linked to the [USG Strategic Plan 2024](#) Goal 2)

Description

We as an institution will continue our work to ensure access and affordability for our students. This will be done by keeping the cost to attend Dalton State affordable and maintaining responsible stewardship through increased efficiency across the college. We will work to reduce the average time to degree completion for both bachelor's and associate degrees, continue to find ways to reduce the annual cost of textbooks and will provide students with available resources to help them minimize federal student loan debt.

Metrics

- Reduce average time to degree for bachelor's and associate degrees.*
- Increase annual savings to students from free textbooks.*
- Decrease the percentage of students who maximize their total federal student loan borrowing.*

*From USG strategic plan

Goal 2: Strategic Initiatives

Continue USG Know More Borrow Less activities*

We will continue practices that support students and their families in making informed borrowing decisions that reduce the total cost of students' education.

Continue USG Affordable Learning Georgia activities*

The USG Affordable Learning Georgia initiative awards grants to provide free and open textbooks to students and supports faculty in redesigning their courses to leverage free and lower cost materials. Dalton State will continue its active participation in the Affordable Learning Georgia initiative.

Improve course scheduling to ensure timely graduation

We will continuously analyze our course scheduling practices and make improvements that remove obstacles to timely graduation.

Increase efficiency in processes and services

We will examine and improve the efficiency of processes and services, especially those that may impede student access.

Improve resource conservation and use of sustainable practices

We will examine our use of resources to improve conservation and increase sustainable practices.

Increase funding from other sources

We will actively pursue funding from a variety of governmental and community sources.

Goal 3: Academic Excellence

We will deliver a collegiate experience to students that develops the competencies and knowledge needed by our communities. (Linked to the [USG Strategic Plan 2024](#) Goal 3)

Description

Dalton State College will align knowledge, competencies and experiences provided to students with the anticipated needs of communities and employment market demands. The collegiate experience will prioritize holistic development, including skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving to facilitate the flexibility and adaptability necessary for rapid change.

The advancement of faculty and staff will contribute to moving innovation forward in student and community development as well as attract talent to Dalton State College.

Metrics

- Measure student achievement of marketable skills in the new general education curriculum.*
- Measure faculty scholarly productivity.*#
- Increase the number of graduates in health professions.*
- Increase the number of student enrollments in experiential learning courses.*
- Increase post-graduation employment and graduate school enrollment rates.

*From USG strategic plan

#Additional guidance from USG required

Goal 3: Strategic Initiatives

Create and implement a process to measure student achievement of marketable skills in the new general education curriculum*

The USG has embarked on a redesign of the general education curriculum's content, delivery and assessment. Each institution in the USG will develop a system to assess students' achievement of marketable skills in the new curriculum.

Create and measure faculty scholarly productivity*#

Innovative faculty research plays an important role in advancing the future economic competitiveness of Georgia. Dalton State will collaborate with the USG to create a faculty scholarly productivity metric.

Explore Nexus Degrees*

Nexus Degrees are an option created by the USG to provide students 60-credit academic options that are flexible, experiential, high-demand and career-oriented. Dalton State will explore the potential of Nexus Degrees to enhance our students' academic opportunities.

Increase experiential learning activities and courses*

Experiential learning involves students learning by doing. Examples include hands-on experiments and activities, internships, study abroad experiences, student research and student performances. A course that contains a high level of experiential learning activities is designated an experiential course. We will increase both the number of experiential learning activities and number of experiential courses.

Improve alignment of degree programs with corporate and community needs

We will examine career-related trends and engage in dialogue with external partners to understand and implement degree program changes that improve alignment with corporate and community needs.

Goal 4: Community Engagement

We will positively impact our communities through a collaborative exchange of knowledge, diverse ideas, innovation and service to improve the societal and economic landscape. (Linked to the [USG Strategic Plan 2024](#) Goal 4)

Description

The successes of Dalton State and our communities are intertwined and dependent upon each other. Our goal at the college is to prepare students to have a positive impact on their communities before and after they graduate. Understanding community needs is essential for us to successfully educate students.

We listen to stakeholders and collaborate with organizations to build mutually beneficial partnerships that inform our teaching, encourage volunteerism and help ensure our graduates fulfill community needs. Through these partnerships, students at Dalton State have the opportunity to participate in internships, clinical/practical health profession experiences, student teaching and service learning. These experiential exchanges support community initiatives and develop our students' knowledge and skills by bringing concepts taught in the classroom to life.

As the first and only Hispanic Serving Institution in Georgia, Dalton State has a unique ability to bring together diverse ideas to improve our society and economy. We believe diversity enriches human interaction and learning. Different perspectives lead to innovative, sustainable solutions for our most persistent and challenging problems. When we engage and learn from each other, we all benefit.

*From USG strategic plan

#Additional guidance from USG required

Goal 4: Metrics

- Increase the number of student enrollments in service-learning courses.
- Increase student volunteer hours.
- Measure employee volunteer participation.
- Increase the number of corporate and community partner engagements.

Goal 4: Strategic Initiatives

Increase corporate and community partner engagement

Dalton State will continue its many community engagement activities and determine new avenues for collaborative partnerships.

Enhance Dalton State's recognition and perception locally, regionally and nationally

We will make contributions locally, regionally and nationally that enhance Dalton State's recognition and perception.

Increase educational opportunities for adult and English-language learners

We will work with community partners to identify and provide additional educational opportunities for adult and English-language learners.

Conclusion

Hundreds of our stakeholders provided us invaluable insights in developing a strategic plan that will provide guidance and clarity for our future actions. Consistent with the USG's strategic focus, the Dalton State College Strategic Plan 2020-2024 calls for us to increase our focus on innovative ways to support and increase students' success, at Dalton State and in their future lives. In collaboration with our community, we will increase our agility in aligning curriculum content and degree programs with changing corporate and community needs. We will further engage with our community in identifying student and faculty volunteerism and service-learning opportunities. Our progress on this journey will be documented and made publicly available on our web site.



Strategic Planning Committee 2020-2024

Lorraine Gardiner – Professor of Management
Information Systems (Chair)

Garrett Burgner – Executive Director,
Department of Health & Wellness

Susan Burran – Associate Professor of Biology
(Faculty Senate representative)

Kerry Dunbar – Professor of Biology

Jim Gordon – Instructor of Supply Chain
Management

Brooklyn Herrera – Coordinator of Tutoring
& Supplemental Instruction (Staff Council
representative)

Elizabeth Hutchins – Executive Director of
Advising & Student Success

Grace Neff – (Student Government
Association representative)

Andrea Ridley – Assistant
Professor of Education

Phil Schlesinger – Director of Marketing

Tammi Walsh – Assistant Director of Human
Resources

Betsy Whitley – Librarian

Lee Ann Williams – Assistant
Professor of Nursing

James Wright – Professor of Criminal Justice
& Sociology; Chair, Social Sciences & History

Ex Officio Members

Margaret Venable – President

Adrian Epps – Interim Provost & VPAA

Nick Henry – Vice President for Fiscal Affairs

Bruno Hicks – Provost & VPAA

Jon Jaudon – Executive Director of Athletics
& External Relations

Jodi Johnson – Vice President for Student
Affairs & Enrollment Management

Consultants

Shelley Nickel – Executive Vice Chancellor
(Ret), USG

Stephani Womack – Doctoral Intern,
University of Georgia; Director of Education
Partnerships, Greater Dalton Chamber of
Commerce

Strategic Planning Subcommittees 2020-2024

Mission, Vision, Values & Goals

Susan Burran (Co-Chair)
Phil Schlesinger (Co-Chair)
Kerry Dunbar
Adrian Epps
Brooklyn Herrera
Tammi Walsh
Stephani Womack
James Wright

SWOT

Jim Gordon (Co-Chair)
Elizabeth Hutchins (Co-Chair)
Garrett Burgner
Adrian Epps
Andrea Ridley
Tammi Walsh
Betsy Whitley
Stephani Womack

Stakeholder Input

Brooklyn Herrera (Co-Chair)
Grace Neff (Co-Chair)
Susan Burran
Jon Jaudon
Betsy Whitley
Lee Ann Williams
Stephani Womack

Goal 1: Student Success

Lee Ann Williams (Chair)
Brooklyn Herrera
Elizabeth Hutchins
Grace Neff
Stephani Womack

Goal 2: Responsible Stewardship

James Wright (Chair)
Kerry Dunbar
Tammi Walsh
Stephani Womack

Goal 3: Academic Excellence

Betsy Whitley (Chair)
Garrett Burgner
Grace Neff
Andrea Ridley
Stephani Womack

Goal 4: Community Engagement

Tammi Walsh (Chair)
Susan Burran
Jim Gordon
Jon Jaudon
Phil Schlesinger
Stephani Womack

Stakeholder Meetings

Faculty Senate, January 16, 2020
Staff Forums, January 21, 2020
Community Forum, January 28, 2020
Faculty Forum, January 30, 2020
Student Government Association, January 31,
2020