



### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of Allen Community College is to provide quality educational and support services in an atmosphere that is caring, safe, and conducive to learning. The college is committed to a wide range of accessible, affordable educational programs that enable students to reach their academic, occupational, and personal potential.

### **The Vision**

Allen Community College is to be recognized for excellence as a valuable, responsive resource to the communities we serve and as a caring, supportive institution that empowers and educates our students, faculty, and staff to embrace change, become lifelong learners, and take their place as productive members of the global community.

### **Planning for a Brighter Future**

Strategic planning at Allen Community College provides a framework for operational planning. This ensures that the college can fulfill its mission, vision, and the needs of its stakeholders. In the summer of 2022, Allen Community College began developing its 2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan by engaging the Clarus Corporation in conducting a Market Assessment of the College's service area – which included Allen County and adjacent areas of Shawnee County, Northern Allen County, and Southeast Kansas. The Assessment looked forward and backward in time to identify trends and anticipate future change. From the Market Assessment the College identified a shift in age and racial demographics, static educational attainment, and higher than average levels of sustained regional poverty in comparison to national metrics.

In the fall of 2022, the College engaged staff, faculty, and community groups in a series of facilitated Strengths Challenges Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) Analyzes about the College and perceived community needs. On August 11, 2022, an internal SCOT analysis was held with college employees during convocation. On November 30, 2022, an external SCOT analysis was held with community members and outside stakeholders. Further discussions formed the basis of the overarching strategic goals for the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

The Board of Trustees was asked to review the mission and vision statements from the 2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan. The Board embraced the continuance of the current mission and vision statements which reflected the College's continued overarching goal to provide "Quality Education in a Caring Atmosphere."



Additional focus sessions throughout the spring of 2023 further refined the Strategic Plan and assisted the College with selecting metrics and measurements aligned with both the Vision of the Governing Board and the statewide Goals of the Kansas Board of Regents.

The 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan is informed by data and exists at the confluence of Vision and Action. Through the focused and intentional allocation of human and financial resources as guided by the Strategic Plan, the College will collaborate with community partners to improve economic conditions in southeast Kansas, increase educational attainment throughout the service area, and build a strong and prosperous future for Allen County.

### **Strength Community Opportunity Threat (SCOT) Executive Summary**

*The quality and dedication of Allen Community College faculty and staff, the modalities to pursue academic programs, affordability, and the College’s culture that promotes educational attainment and/or institutional efficiency, were identified as **major strengths** of the institution.*

### **Allen faces challenges from external competitors to its traditional market.**

Private 2-year and 4-year Colleges and University are actively recruiting students in Allen County. Challenges also exist with declining enrollment, lack of career and technical programs, facilities, student retention and persistence, recruiting qualified faculty and staff, and low wages. As the demographics of the surrounding areas change, Allen will face intense competition from these institutions to serve the emerging market of Hispanic students.

### **Allen has an opportunity to enhance brand recognition within its own market.**

A small, but significant, proportion of the county still does not know that there is a College in Allen County. A larger portion of the service area believes: 1) the College only supports transfer to state Universities, 2). Despite, or perhaps because of, its affordability and physical presence within rural Allen County, there is a perception that a degree from Allen is somehow worth less than a degree from a 4-year University or private College. This is particularly true among recent high school graduates, where the College’s penetration rate hovers around 30%. Current Allen students cite the “community college stigma” and a perceived lack of student life activities as contributing factors for potential students selecting to go elsewhere.

**The overall talent pool in the community is limited and poses a threat for local recruitment of highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators.**

County poverty, climate, and “ruralness” then affects the College’s ability to retain imported talent. Through more emphasis on staff development and review of hiring practices, Allen has an opportunity to foster a faculty, staff, and administration with a demonstrated commitment to student achievement, and an understanding of and respect for the cultural traditions and ethnic diversity of an evolving Iola campus. The College has satisfied the last of its long-term debt obligations and, with the need for new infrastructure, it needs to purchase adjacent property to expand academic offerings.

**The College is in a strong financial position and is strategically positioned to invest in initiatives that build institutional capacity to serve the changing needs of Iola and Allen County.**

Many aging facilities on the campus were designed for 20th-century pedagogy. Classrooms contain a row of desks pointed toward a central wall where an instructor stands. Technological changes and shifts toward more experiential learning models challenge traditional approaches to classroom design. There is a greater demand for hands-on, collaborative learning experiences. Student engagement is a critical factor in student success, retention, and completion. The impacts of increased experiential learning will be tracked and monitored through the SENSE and CCCSE surveys. Changes in pedagogy are coupled with a general shift toward Hybrid/Hyflex work models. The pandemic presented students and staff with diverse ways of working, learning, and collaborating.

Older facilities may no longer serve their intended purpose in a post-pandemic learning environment. While disruptive, the pandemic has created an opportunity to evaluate space utilization and make learning environments more flexible and dynamic. New buildings are not always necessary. Careful evaluation of existing spaces can lead to solutions that help colleges prepare for the future and allow teaching practices to evolve alongside technological changes. Addressing aging facilities is a large undertaking. A long-term plan can help the College budget and phase projects.

**The demographic of the Allen service area is changing and offers *opportunity*.**

There is growth in the 55+ age demographic. K-12 enrollments are declining throughout Allen County, thus reducing the number of traditionally aged students in the Allen pipeline. From 2015 – 2020, the population of white, non-Hispanic, individuals declined in multiple age categories under 55+ years of age. The reverse



was true of the Hispanic population, which grew across most age categories. From 2017 to 2022, the Southern Service Area of Allen Community College grew by 4,000 individuals, with Hispanic individuals accounting for 57% of that growth. The existing threat is not being positioned to serve the surging Hispanic population in the northern tier of Allen's service area.