Navigating Our Future Collegewide Strategic Plan: 2013-2018

In 2012, Iowa Lakes collected and analyzed scholarly writings, journal articles and trends to help forecast the next five years. The overarching trends led to the seven areas listed below.

**Area I: Educational Competition:** *Competition from other institutions of higher education will continue to increase. Furthermore, as the unemployment rate declines, employment will likely present an additional competitive factor. Simultaneously, policymakers will continue to pressure community colleges to enhance accessibility to, and to reduce the costs of, a quality college education.*

Iowa Lakes strives to serve our constituents, and to understand their motivations. In order to do so, Iowa Lakes relies on student satisfaction surveys, student focus groups, advisory committees and employers among others. Some examples include:

Higher Satisfaction vs. National Community Colleges: Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2016
- My academic advisory is knowledgeable about my program requirements
- My advisor helps me apply my program of student to career goals
- Students are made to feel welcome here
- Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me
- I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts
- There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term
- The campus staff are caring and helpful
- My academic advisor is available when I need help
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible
- Registration processes and procedures are convenient
- I am able to take care of college-related business at times that are convenient for me
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about transfer requirements of other schools

Constituent Survey: Clay County Fair Survey, September 2018: text analysis
What do you think of when you hear Iowa Lakes Community College?

Lakers Good Place Great Place Agriculture Emmetsburg Tech
Soccer Nice Local Learning Education Alma Mater
College Alumni School Graduated Program Attended
Nursing Close to Home Opportunity Wind Energy Estherville Spencer
Heard
Area II: Economic Development & Entrepreneurship: As rural communities compete for scarce resources and battle declining populations, economic development will assume a critical function in a community’s viability, with entrepreneurship constituting an expanding component of future economic development. Consequently, community colleges will be expected to strengthen and expand their leadership roles in economic development and entrepreneurship endeavors.

President Newhouse serves as a Board member for the (1) Iowa Lakes Corridor Economic Development Corporation, (2) Estherville Area Partnership for Growth, (3) Excel Estherville Oversight Committee, (4) Emmetsburg Community Development Corporation, (5) Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation, (6) Tietz Entrepreneurial Center Advisory Committee, and collaborates on the Mid-Iowa Growth Partnership Development Corporation initiatives. Additionally, college administrators attend regional economic development council meetings. Information is shared at the Cabinet level to assure training initiatives are communicated with business leaders.

The Tietz Entrepreneurial Center was piloted fall 2015 through a generous gift from the Donald Tietz Charitable Foundation. A coordinator was hired and supports outreach of the Small Business Development Center Director housed at the Spencer Campus. Focus is on education programming for program students who may be interested in starting a venture and community members who have a passion for their product or service and need assistance in preparing to launch their company. Other programming focuses to introduce entrepreneurship to area sixth graders and high school students.

Over the past five years, Iowa Lakes has partnered with growing manufacturers to secure training funds to onboard those new employees. Since FY2014, an average of 202 new jobs have been created. Countless others have been filled due to attrition and retirements. Companies participating in the 260E New Jobs Training over the past five years, received nearly $7 million in training funds from bond sale of $10.345 million.

For the 2013-18 period, training grants awarded to companies within the College district combined, averaged $177,415 annually. Twenty-eight companies participated in the grant program through Iowa
Economic Development Corporation. Companies submit a training plan to be completed within a two-year time period. Goal of the college was to increase access to the funding opportunity and strive to have companies from all five counties benefit.

**Area III: Demographics:** Northwest Iowa will continue to be significantly impacted by demographic shifts, as the regional population declines, ages, and diversifies.

Iowa Lakes Community College serves a five-county area. In order to understand our direction, Iowa Lakes must first understand our constituents. The charts below show our area five-year trends in a snapshot.

Population, secondary enrollment and minority population in our five-county area are remaining mostly steady. Household incomes are generally stagnate, and unemployment rates have declined, which was forecast.

**U.S. Census Bureau:**

![Population Chart](chart1.png)

![Income Chart](chart2.png)

![6th-12th Grade Enrollment Changes Chart](chart3.png)

![Unemployment Chart](chart4.png)

![% Minority Population Chart](chart5.png)
**Area IV: Public Policy & Regulatory:** Accountability in higher education will remain a focal point of policymakers, and future regulatory changes will likely fuse student financial aid and higher education funding with student retention, graduation, success, and employability rates.

Iowa Lakes tracks data through internal, state and federal reporting; as well as voluntary participation in surveys and benchmarking projects. Below are a sample of reported outcomes:

Iowa Lakes Community College, NCCBP Fall 2016 cohort National Report
**Area V: Technology & Data:** The growth of technology will continue its swift pace, and, as K12 schools continue to implement 1:1 learning initiatives, students entering higher education will expect technology to be embedded within the college infrastructure. Moreover, the expectation of systematic data-informed decision-making processes will continue to drive a college’s requirement to analyze even more data in an efficient and effective manner.

Iowa Lakes was awarded a Title III Grant, September 2016. The total awarded for the five-year grant is $1,685,885. The purpose of the grant is to assess, update, and infuse technology into curriculum, redesign and assess hybrid offerings, and expand ongoing faculty development opportunities to improve student learning and engagement.

The grant will upgrade instructional technology on all five campuses, with two programs, Agriculture and Nursing, serving as pilot programs for specialized technology. Nursing will receive a new simulation lab which features three hospital rooms and a nursing station. The new simulation lab will include a camera system and two simulation mannequins to provide the students with repeatable real life experiences. The Agriculture program will be receiving a planter with GPS equipment. The Agriculture program will also be purchasing a new tractor cab simulator and on-site soil analysis equipment.

A project that has been completed is the active learning classroom on the Emmetsburg campus. This classroom, like that in Estherville, has large screen TVs, which connect wirelessly to the Microsoft Surface Pros, and mobile desks and chairs. Along with purchasing the new equipment, Iowa Lakes Community College is focusing on training faculty to infuse technology and to incorporate adaptive learning into classrooms.

After being awarded the grant, Iowa Lakes hired two new positions, the Title III Grant Coordinator and the Educational Technologist. Brooke Johnson is the Grant Coordinator and oversees the basic functions of the grant, and Dr. Jennifer Peterson is the Educational Technologist, who will spend her time on the campuses working with faculty to use the new technology.

In addition, Iowa Lakes has hired an Institutional Researcher, Fall 2018, which will help drive the use of data and data-driven decision making.

**Area VI: Student Learning:** Although brick and mortar higher education institutions will not become extinct, the exponential growth of technology will, through the process of “creative destruction,” multiply student-learning options.

Iowa Lakes, as a member of the Iowa Community College Online Consortium, is able to offer online classes and programs to students anywhere.

**Area VII: Labor & Workforce:** Competition for qualified workers, especially for mid-level skilled jobs, will continue to increase, and community colleges will experience even more pressure to produce a quality, skilled workforce in an expedient, cost-effective, and “on-demand” manner.
Over the past five years, the Iowa Legislature provided funding to the college to focus on short-term, skill-up programs through GAP scholarships for individuals meeting income guidelines to receive training in high-skill, high-demand career fields. As a result, the Community & Business Relations team hosted a “Career Pathway” development session with targeted program faculty in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing, Business, Agriculture, Energy and Health Care. Sector partnership advisory boards were convened to assist with further program development and engage area industry professionals to further integrate communication between credit and non-credit programs. As a result of the GAP programs, 217 individuals were served and secured NEW employment in the area. (Average 43 individuals annually. Enrollments ranged from 33 to 57 during a year’s period.)

Several programs developed with “new to” the industry were developed, and evolved into training programs for existing employees. One of those programs is the Commercial Applicator program. Individuals who are interested in that career can enroll in the program, and to date, the enrollments have all come from area businesses who are investing in their existing employees. The job opportunities for applicators continue to be strong.

As companies in the Iowa Lakes Community College district searched for employees, with virtually full-employment, the enrollments in the non-credit program offerings continue to grow. Area businesses must grow their own and develop succession plans to fill key positions as employees retire.

A source of employees for the area are the Iowa Lakes Community College graduates. Enrollments in the credit programs are stable. Graduation rates continue to near the top of Iowa’s community colleges. Employer survey results confirm the graduates are prepared to work in their chosen field. The professional skills (communication, time management and teamwork) continue to be on the top 10 list of attributes employers seek. Classes focusing on those difficult to master skills are readily available through non-credit and customized training classes. Enrollments have more than doubled in those areas.

With adoption of the 2013 Strategic Plan, under category VII, improving communication and connections between businesses and the college was identified as a priority. Fall 2014, the Launch Career Magazine was piloted. The magazine featured success stories, training programs and a classified listing of courses.

In 2017, Iowa Lakes launched an online registration system that has made it convenient for businesses to enroll employees in these classes and seminars. Enrollments in the non-credit division since FY2013 have rising 42% (from 5,146 to 8,154 enrollments FY18).

Reflection: Changes are constant and learning is best done through doing. Working through this strategic plan has helped guide the direction of the next Strategic Plan 2019-2023 – Beginning the Next 50 Years. While this plan was in-depth and inclusive, the next has been written with a broader scope in mind. Iowa Lakes Community College’s mission, vision and values remain the same, but like the students we serve, our hope is to grow and learn from our experiences.