

# The Way **Forward** and Why It Matters

2007-2017

*A Journey From Success to Greater Significance*

Adopted by the OCCC Board of  
Regents on April 16, 2007



OKLAHOMA CITY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*“Hold fast to the best of the past.  
Run fast with the best of the future.”*

– John F. Kennedy

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Oklahoma City Community College has experienced remarkable success through the years, increasing enrollment, serving students well, and partnering with the community. *The Way Forward and Why It Matters* has been developed as a guide to transition the college from this traditional success to greater significance.

### Vision and ENDS Statements

To define success and guide the College toward greater significance, the following vision statement has been adopted:



*OCCC aspires to be one of the most significant community colleges in the nation—known for the amazing success of our students and for our prominent role in creating our community's future.*

Our ENDS statements define our key outcomes that are critical to achieving significance. They are as follows:

1. **Access:** Our community has broad and equitable access to a valuable college education.
2. **Student Preparation:** Our students are prepared to succeed in college.
3. **Student Success:** Our students achieve their individual educational aspirations.
4. **Graduate Success:** Our graduates succeed at four-year institutions and/or in their careers.
5. **Community Development:** Our community is enriched economically and socially by our educational and cultural programs.

### The High Costs of Not Going to College

Higher education is essential for prosperity in an increasingly global, competitive, and knowledge-based economy. Oklahoma suffers from a severe educational attainment gap, ranking 42<sup>nd</sup> in the number of its residents who have a college education. This gap directly correlates with higher incarceration rates, poor health quality, and a lower standard of living.

OCCC has its own gaps as well in the areas of persistence of our first-time students from the first semester to the next, support for at-risk/at-promise students, and preparation for college-level courses.

### Critical Factors Affecting Plan Development

Critical factors in our environment, which we must respond to in order to achieve our mission, include the following:

1. OCCC's **Strong Foundation** of success in access, graduate success, and the development of new programs.
2. A **Gap in Education** resulting in too few Oklahomans completing a college degree.
3. Our **Changing Local Economy** that requires college degrees or post-secondary certificates.
4. The **Globalization** of America, Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City.
5. The **Millennial Generation** that has a high expectation for delivery of services and flexibility in learning formats.
6. **Diversity** in our local and national demographics.
7. **Leadership** preparation for those who will step in as a generation of leaders retires.
8. **Accountability** to meet student achievement measures for accreditation and funding purposes.

## The Way Forward Initiatives

To achieve OCCC's vision of greater significance, ten key initiatives have been developed.

- 1. Achieving the Dream<sup>SM</sup> Initiative**  
This initiative focuses on the preparation and success of students early in their college experience by implementing identified best practices.
- 2. Technology and Personalized Service Initiative**  
This "high tech and high touch" initiative provides enhanced technology-assisted services for a personalized 24/7 service environment for our students.
- 3. OCCC Online and Off-Campus Initiative**  
This initiative focuses efforts on three important growth areas including Online Learning, Cooperative Academic Agreements, and Corporate Learning.
- 4. OCCC Institute for Global Excellence Initiative**  
The Institute includes the Center for International Business, the Center for World Languages, and the Center for International Alliances, all focused on better preparing our students and community to participate in our global economy and society.
- 5. The Next Generation of Leaders Initiative**  
As the current generation of community college leaders and senior faculty retire, OCCC must prepare our next generation of leaders to meet the challenges of the future.
- 6. New Learning Spaces Initiative**  
Focused on improving learning and retention, this renovation/remodel project will provide enhancements to the learning spaces on campus.
- 7. Capitol Hill Center Initiative**  
A new, larger center in the Capitol Hill area will expand educational services to our community in a location convenient to where they live and work.
- 8. Childcare for Students Initiative**  
This initiative would require a new childcare facility to provide high-quality care for the children of students who are attending or who hope to attend OCCC.
- 9. Center for the Arts – Phase II – Theatre**  
Originally planned as part of the new Center for Arts Education, the performing arts center will serve as the cultural center for south Oklahoma City.
- 10. Campus Facilities**  
The current campus facilities will continue to require review and modification based on the changing needs of our students and community. Several areas need significant renovation or updating and additional academic spaces will be needed, including a new building to house the Division of Social Sciences and/or the Division of Business.

## Funding

Recurring costs to fund these initiatives are estimated at \$5 to \$10 million. Capital costs are estimated at \$40 million. Current revenue sources fall short of fully funding all of the operational costs and capital improvements proposed in this plan, therefore, new dedicated funding sources will be required.

## Conclusion

*The Way Forward and Why It Matters* provides a direction for OCCC to significantly increase the number of Oklahomans who graduate from college and for OCCC to play a prominent role in creating a future for our community that is economically, culturally, and socially prosperous.

# FORWARD



Good plans begin with a frank expression of gratitude to those who came before us. At OCCC we truly stand on *“the shoulders of giants.”* Men and women who, thirty-five years ago, turned a field in southwest Oklahoma City into a community of learners that has contributed immeasurably to the economic development and well-being of Central Oklahoma.

The previous effort to move OCCC to a new level, called the *Vision of the Future*, was approved in late 2003. This plan, which was developed in response to pressing classroom and instructional capacity needs, included three large building projects: the Todd Science, Engineering, and Math Center; the Center of Health Professions Education;

and the Center for Arts Education. The Todd Center will be complete in early 2007, and the other facilities should be finished in the late spring or early summer of the following year. Additional initiatives to increase parking, the number of full-time faculty and staff, and to expand community outreach have also been implemented. For all practical purposes, the *Vision of the Future* has been accomplished.

What is next?

## The Way Forward and Why It Matters

## Begin with the End in Mind — Our New Vision and ENDS

In the fall of 2006, the OCCC Board of Regents developed new vision and ENDS statements (or key outcomes) to define success and guide the college's administration.

### Our vision statement:

*OCCC aspires to be one of the most significant community colleges in the nation—known for the amazing success of our students and for our prominent role in creating our community's future.*

In a sense, our new ENDS statements are a commentary on this vision. They reflect the fact that amazing student success happens along a continuum, beginning before the student enters OCCC and lasting after he or she has left us. They also emphasize a more dynamic and creative role in making our community a better place to live.

### Our ENDS:

1. **Access:** Our community has broad and equitable access to a valuable college education.
2. **Student Preparation:** Our students are prepared to succeed in college.
3. **Student Success:** Our students achieve their individual educational aspirations.
4. **Graduate Success:** Our graduates succeed at four-year institutions and/or in their careers.
5. **Community Development:** Our community is enriched economically and socially by our educational and cultural programs.

## Key Factors in the Development of the *Way Forward*

In 2006, the Board of Regents and college administration, in consultation with faculty, staff, and community leaders, conducted a strategic review that resulted in ten key initiatives collectively called *The Way Forward and Why It Matters*. The development of *The Way Forward and Why It Matters* was influenced by four important factors:

1. The college's new vision and ENDS statements focusing on student success and a more proactive role in the community.
2. Important trends in the external environment.
3. Emerging best practices for community colleges summarized as the transition from "*success to greater significance.*"
4. A clear recognition of why receiving an education matters and why it will even be more important in the future.



*OCCC's new vision statement centers on student success and the college's role in creating a thriving community.*

The growth of community colleges was probably the single most successful educational innovation of the Twentieth Century.

## From Success to Greater Significance

*The Way Forward* will be a journey from success in 2007 to greater significance in the next decade. Greater significance requires standards of excellence that will result in improved retention and graduation rates, significantly raising the number of Oklahomans who are prepared to go to college and complete a college education.

With its deep roots in service to the community and responsiveness to the local educational and cultural needs, OCCC is positioned to play a more prominent role in creating our community's future—a future that raises the intellectual capital and quality of life for Oklahoma and allows America to compete in the global marketplace and thrive economically, culturally, and socially.



### The Way Forward: Greater Significance

#### Traditional Success

- Increasing enrollment by reaching new populations of students
- OCCC is a gateway of opportunity for at-risk/at-promise students
- OCCC serves students and satisfies their expectations
- Technology is available
- Accountability viewed as compliance
- OCCC is a good community partner



#### Greater Significance

- People aspire to attend OCCC, enroll, and are retained as successful students
- At-risk/at-promise students succeed at rates comparable to all students
- OCCC inspires students and prepares them to be successful college students AND amazes students by exceeding expectations
- Technology significantly enhances the college/learning experience
- Accountability used as a strategic tool that provides data to track and improve performance on the ENDS
- OCCC has a prominent role in creating our community's future



## Why It Matters — The High Costs of Not Going to College

Higher education is essential for prosperity in an increasingly global, competitive, and knowledge-based economy. Writing in *Community College Journal*, Anthony P. Carnevale and Donna Desrochers note:

*“The U.S. workforce, whose size has increased by almost 50 percent over the past 20 years, will slow its growth to only 16 percent over the next several decades. Assuming even a moderate employment growth rate of 15 percent and a continuing increase in skill requirements on the job, the combined effects of these trends should result in significant labor shortages of at least 20 million workers... Two-thirds of the expected shortage in 2020 will likely arise in the most skilled jobs, resulting in a net deficit of about 14 million workers with at least some college.”*

Unfortunately, Oklahoma suffers from a particularly severe educational attainment gap. Currently, the state ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the number of its residents who have a college education.

This has had an impact on the economic vitality and quality of life in the state and directly correlates with its high incarceration rates, poor health quality, and lower standard of living.

### Costs to the state:

- Lower prosperity and economic growth
- Higher costs for public assistance
- Higher healthcare costs
- Higher incarceration rates and costs

### Costs to individuals:

- Lower wages
- Reduced employment benefits (retirement, healthcare, etc.)
- Reduced likelihood of employment
- Reduced quality of life

The National Information Center for Higher Education projects that 75 percent of the new jobs created in the world will require education beyond a high school diploma. Only 35 percent of Americans have at least two years of post-secondary education. The U.S. now ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in average education attainment and is on a steady decline. Out of 32 countries ranked between 2000 and 2003, the U.S. dropped five places to 20<sup>th</sup> in undergraduate science degrees earned, and slipped six spots to 26<sup>th</sup> in undergraduate math degrees earned.

OCCC has its own “gaps” as well:

**Persistence Gap** - 25 percent of our first-time, full-time students do not return for the subsequent semester. 43 percent of all first-time students do not return for the subsequent semester.

**Support Gap** - Our at-risk/at-promise students (low socioeconomic status, minority status or first-generation status) have lower persistence and completion rates regardless of ACT scores or high school grade point average.

**Preparation Gap** - Developmental and gateway course completion rates are significantly below our average completion rate.

OCCC's *Way Forward* is the way forward for our community as a whole.



*The Way Forward and Why It Matters will be a journey from success to greater significance.*



## Critical Factors Affecting Plan Development

Our vision statement and ENDS reflect our aspirations, but plans don't happen in a vacuum. We identified eight critical factors in our environment to which we must affirmatively respond to achieve our vision.

- **Strong Foundation.** OCCC has a strong foundation of success with regard to the historic focus on access, success of our graduates, and the development of new programs in response to the needs of the community.
- **Gap in Education.** Too few Oklahomans are prepared for success in college, and too few Oklahomans complete a college degree.
- **Changing Local Economy.** The loss of many manufacturing jobs and the growth of healthcare, biomedical research, aviation, and computer-related industries have made a college education more valuable. Jobs that require a college degree or post-secondary certificate are growing at twice the pace of those jobs that require only a high school diploma.
- **Globalization.** America, Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City are globally interconnected with the world, economically and socially. Many nations are actively promoting higher education as a way to improve their standard of living and successfully compete in this new global world.
- **Millennial Generation.** Today's college student's world has always included the computer, the Internet, cell phones, and other digital devices with a dramatic impact on expectations for delivery of services and learning format (including learning spaces on campus and in the virtual environment).
- **Diversity.** Our changing local demographics are a reflection of what is happening nationally. Minorities have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education and have been less successful in completing college degrees.
- **Leadership.** An increasing number of current leaders and senior faculty in community colleges are scheduled for retirement. Community concerns have been expressed nationally to ensure that colleges develop a new generation of leaders who are prepared to step in and lead their institutions.
- **Accountability.** Colleges and universities will increasingly be expected to report student achievement measures for accreditation and funding purposes.

## The Way Forward Initiatives

To achieve the vision of greater significance in the years to come and with careful consideration of the critical factors impacting OCCC and our community, five key initiatives with personnel and operational funding requirements, and five key projects with capital funding requirements, were developed to be accomplished over the next ten years.

## Key Operational Initiatives

### 1. **Achieving the Dream<sup>SM</sup> Initiative**

This comprehensive initiative addresses the preparation and success of students early in their college experience (prior to their first semester and throughout their first year of college) and focuses on the implementation of “*best practices*,” including improving success in developmental classes, a required freshman orientation class, learning communities, early intervention, and supplemental instruction outside of class.

### 2. **Technology and Personalized Service Initiative**

This initiative is best described as “*high tech and high touch*.” Enhanced technology-assisted services can provide a personalized 24/7 service environment for our students who are comfortable using technology, freeing up highly trained staff to provide customer-oriented person-to-person support.

### 3. **OCCC Online and Off-Campus Initiative**

Online Learning - Online enrollment, along with the number of courses and programs offered online, continues to be limited by our capacity to support the format. Expansion requires additional support (instructional designers, software specialists, online tech support professionals, and instructors) to increase capacity.

Cooperative Academic Agreements - Alliance Agreements with area technology centers and Concurrent Enrollment Agreements with area high schools have proven to be an effective and efficient model for OCCC to increase the number of students who complete a college degree. Expansion will require additional resources to support their students.

Corporate Learning - The new focus of OCCC’s business and industry training is to offer our credit courses and programs directly to the business, either through live instruction or via online, web-based learning to the desktop of the employee.

### 4. **OCCC Institute for Global Excellence Initiative**

This new Institute will serve to better prepare our students and community to participate in the globally interconnected economy and society. The Institute will include the Center for International Business, the Center for World Languages and Culture, and the Center for International Alliances.

### 5. **The Next Generation of Leaders Initiative**

The current generation of community college leaders and senior faculty are scheduled for retirement in large numbers. The college must prepare our next generation of leaders to ensure OCCC will thrive in the future. A focus of this development will be increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff, especially in leadership positions.

### 6. **New Learning Spaces Initiative**

This renovation/remodel project provides enhancements to the learning spaces on-campus to improve learning and retention, including the creation of virtual and physical spaces outside of the classroom for collaborative learning and informal interaction, redesign of existing classrooms, and the creation of additional space for student organizations and groups.



7. **Capitol Hill Center Initiative**

A new, larger center is required to continue and expand educational services to the community at a location that is convenient for those who work, live, or go to school in the Capitol Hill area of south Oklahoma City.

8. **Childcare for Students Initiative**

One of the greatest needs expressed by students and others in the community is access to reliable, high-quality childcare for students with children who hope to attend or are attending OCCC. This initiative would require a new facility, perhaps located near our current Child Development Program lab school, and would serve to provide low-cost childcare for students. Childcare issues are also a consideration at the Capitol Hill Center.

9. **Center for the Arts-Phase II-Theatre**

A performing arts theatre was originally planned for the Center for the Arts. This project is carried over from the previous long-range plan as a key project believed to be essential for OCCC to serve as the cultural center for south Oklahoma City.

10. **Campus Facilities**

OCCC's existing space requirements and utilization is continually reviewed and modified to adapt to changing needs. There are currently areas that need significant renovation or updating, including the Aquatic Center. The Nursing Program could continue to grow beyond the space allocated in the new Health Professions Education Center. An updated Master Facilities Plan will include an additional academic building to house the divisions of Business and/or Social Sciences.

## Funding

The recurring costs to fund the initiatives listed are estimated between \$5-10 million. The capital costs are estimated at \$40 million (including \$15 million for the theatre).

Current revenue sources fall short of fully funding all of the operational costs and the capital improvements proposed in this plan. Therefore, funding will rely on increases in state appropriations, through re-allocation of current resources and a new campaign to significantly increase the endowment. The major capital projects would require dedicated new sources, such as bond issues and/or private funds. The renovation of existing space can be accomplished with Section 13 Offset Funds.



## **Conclusion**

*The Way Forward And Why It Matters* provides a direction for OCCC to significantly increase the number of Oklahomans who graduate from college and for OCCC to play a prominent role in creating a future for our community that is economically, culturally, and socially prosperous.

*“Destiny is not a matter of chance.  
It is a matter of choice.*

*It is not something to be waited for.  
It is something to be achieved.”*

– William Jennings Bryan





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