



< *ADMISSIONS* >

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022/23 – 2026/27

Technical College of the Lowcountry

# Technical College of the Lowcountry

## **Mission**

The TCL provides quality, affordable academic and technical programs leading to Associate Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates in an environment fostering excellence in teaching and learning.

## **Vision**

Our vision is to elevate each student and every community we serve through transformative technology and exceptional teaching.

## **Values**

### *Excellence*

We value continuous quality improvement leading to true excellence in all areas of the college.

### *Innovation*

We value expansion and enhancement of the college's services and educational offerings to meet the increasing and changing needs of students, employers and the communities we serve.

### *Integrity*

We value responsibility, accountability, ethical behavior in an atmosphere of honesty, open communication, and with mutual respect.

### *Respect*

We value an education environment that attracts and supports a diverse student and staff community, and fosters awareness.

### *Stewardship*

We value the responsible use of resources to achieve balance among social, economic, and environmental practices.

## **Institutional Goals**

1. Enhance and sustain student success from application to completion.
2. Advance academic quality.
3. Improve operational effectiveness and promote resource stewardship.
4. Cultivate an environment of accountability, communication and teamwork.

## UNIT OVERVIEW

### Unit Level Mission Statement

**The Technical College of the Lowcountry's Office of Admissions strives to provide high quality customer service to recruit and admit students that supports the educational, social, and cultural mission of TCL.**

### Unit Level Summary

The Office of Admissions is made up of 6 full-time and 1 part-time staff member supporting all of the TCL campuses for the purpose of recruitment and admission to the college credit programs. These roles consist of a:

- Director of Recruitment and Admissions
- Admissions Recruiter (Beaufort)
- Admissions Processor (Beaufort)
- Admissions Counselor (New River)
- Admissions Assistant (New River-part-time contract employee)

The Director of Recruitment and Admissions Supervises the Dual Enrollment program (see Dual Enrollment Strategic Plan):

- Dual Enrollment Coordinator (Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Colleton)
- Dual Enrollment Coordinator (Whale Branch Early College High School)

Admissions services are provided to students at the Hampton Campus by a Navigator (non-admissions staff) and there is also assistance for our Veteran and Active Duty Military students provided by the Veterans Resource Center. The Admissions department has seen restructuring of its staff members recently due to the implementation of the Title III grant. Prior to the grant, there were 3 full-time admissions counselors at the Beaufort Campus. A position was re-classified to a Navigator in the Hub which led to the admissions office re-evaluating the roles of the admissions counselors at the Beaufort Campus.

The Office of Admissions is the only office on campus that has contact with every prospect and student prior to admission to the college. We strive to provide excellent customer service while educating the community at large about the benefits of enrolling at TCL. We strive to seamlessly move a student through the enrollment pipeline so that they may move on to the registration process with limited to no issues.

Our goal is always to maintain and increase enrollment. Covid-19 has provided many obstacles for our office, but we are beginning to see some more positive enrollment numbers. There has been a steady increase of dual enrollment students in the past 5 years, which is leading to increased popularity of the early college model across our service areas.

Recruitment has expanded its reach in the past few years with the implementation of our Student Ambassador program. These students provide a real time perspective of the student experience and have been a huge benefit to our office in expanding our ability to increase our attendance at community events.

Areas of improvement lie in overall functionality of our student communication and tracking systems and staff required to perform the day to day requirements of this office. Losing the full-time position and transitioning to a full-time processor and a full-time recruiter has seen its ups and downs. Staff turnover has proved to be extremely difficult on the current employees as they are taking on other duties and focus on the task at hand is sometimes spread thin. If the goals of TCL as an institution are to grow our enrollment pool, there has to be a priority put on the technology and the staff to be able to take on an increase in prospects and applications. As for student tracking and communication, we are relying heavily upon a tool that is cumbersome, outdated and extremely manual. Students are receiving their enrollment steps via email only. Prospects are captured separately, which makes it difficult for the institution to track a prospect all the way through the pipeline. The institution needs to invest in a Customer Relations Management System (CRM) that includes an in-house application system as well as staff that can provide outbound and inbound service to our ever-growing community at a high priority level.

	Enhance and sustain student success from application to completion	Advance academic quality	Improve operational effectiveness and promote resource stewardship	Cultivate an environment of accountability, communication and teamwork
Excellent Customer Service	X		X	X
Student Focused Recruitment Strategies	X	X	X	X
Following State and Institutional Policies and Procedures as it applies to admission of students	X		X	X

## STRATEGIC SCAN

### The External Environment

Covid-19 has posed several challenges for the Admissions department over the past 2 years. For the first time since March of 2020, we were finally allowed back in the High Schools for Fall application days in 2021. The disconnect between our physical presence at high schools and in the community caused a decrease in applications to the college. Students were either less interested in moving on to college after high school, going right to work or moving on to 4-year institutions. This was the opposite case for Dual Enrollment, as the pandemic boasted an increase in application and registrations.

The pandemic has also caused a massive disruption in the ability to maintain staff members. Competing institutions and employers are offering more competitive salaries and opportunities, including working virtually, making it difficult to hire, train and retain employees for the long term. With constant turn over in key admissions positions, we are unable to create strong

relationships with our community and school districts, as well as give prospective and current students consistency.

The perception of a community college education as “last resort” is still very present in our community. Although we have made some strides, there are still communities that don’t believe our credits transfer, or see the benefit of a 2-year degree vs a 4-year degree. Status is still very important to some families in certain parts of our service areas. On the other hand, we also have students that don’t believe they are equipped for college at all and choose to go into the workforce or military as opposed to getting their foot in the door at TCL. We are working tirelessly to show our community members the benefits of TCL’s degrees and certificates to our local workforce.

Cost of living, increased gas prices and limited resources for the Hispanic community are additional external factors making recruitment efforts difficult in parts of our service area. Students from Colleton County do not perceive TCL as an option due to our campus location, and lack of affordable housing.

## The Internal Environment

The pandemic affected our internal environment in a number of ways. When we went completely online, we were forced to update some of our procedures in the Admissions office that made processing much easier. We eliminated some roadblocks for students and also opened up the option of virtual appointments, making our offices more accessible than ever. We will continue to offer these resources with hopes that the institution will invest in better technology to support the onboarding process for our applicants.

There are several areas of improvement that need to be addressed in order for our office to be successful in its enrollment goals in this strategic plan:

1. Development of employee incentives or more competitive salaries with tiered levels. Right now, there is no incentive to stay, no employee reward system and a complete lack of support. Turn over will not cease until the institution chooses to address this issue for all departments.
2. Increase of employees to better serve the increasing population and program growth: Population growth is high in all areas and based on the ins and outs, we have seen a shift in where our students are coming from. The majority of employees are housed at the Beaufort campus; however, the student population is about 50/50 when comparing New River to Beaufort. Employees at the New River Campus are serving 3 students to every 1 that an employee will be assisting in Beaufort. The institution needs to invest in Admissions Counselors and Recruiters.
3. Implementation of a CRM with a home-grown application. This will allow our department to track students from prospect to applicant and better serve our students in the enrollment pipeline.

4. Implementation of a more robust texting platform that will allow us become less reliant on email as our sole communication tool.
5. Hire a Bilingual Admissions/Recruitment position. This position will work closely with the Diversity and Inclusion office to offer programming to support the Hispanic/Latino population.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

1. Strategic Focus Area: **Transform the student experience from onboarding to completion**

- A. Objective

*It is clear that TCL must transform the student experience from onboarding to completion. A pro-active comprehensive pathway for student success incorporating advancements in the technological infrastructure must be developed and implemented with support to aid students in navigating their educational goals. We want to increase the percentage of admitted students who enroll in the fall term from 22% to 32% through the implementation of expanded student support.*

- B. Describe alignment with institutional goals

*This will align with institutional goals because the more students we recruit and the more efficient we are with communication and moving them through the enrollment pipeline, the more likely they are to stay and for enrollment to increase. This aligns with directly with the goals of our guided pathways Title III grant.*

- C. Success criteria

*Our success criteria will be based off of application data, enrollment numbers and retention data utilizing the success measurements outlined in the Title III grant.*

Year Two			
2.1 Increase student engagement from 49.1 to 51.1 (CCSSE) through implementation of guided pathways by Sept. 2021	2.1a Eight (8) guided pathway piloted 2.1b 50% of new students enrolled in guided pathways 2.1c 2.0 point increase in engagement (CCSSE)	3.4 Increase fall-to-fall retention from 48% to 50% through the implementation of comprehensive technological services by Sept. 2022	3.4a 2% increase in fall-to-fall retention 3.4b 98% students used Navigate to support academic plan, contact advisor, respond to call to action 3.4c Early alert protocols designed
2.2 Increase the percentage of admitted students who enroll in the fall term from 24% to 26% through the implementation of expanded student support by Sept. 2021	2.2a Pathways Hub is piloted 2.2b Onboarding services are redesigned 2.2c Onboarding services ready for pilot 2.2d 2.0% in admitted students who enroll in fall	4.1 Increase student achievement in gateway courses from 74% to 76% through contextualization and implementation of high impact practices by Sept. 2023	4.1a High impact practices in instruction piloted in gateway courses 4.1b 2% increase in student achievement in gateway courses with high impact practices
2.3 Increase student satisfaction with support for learners from 51 to 53 (CCSSE) through the implementation of expanded student support by Sept. 2021	2.3a 50% of new students use Pathways Hub and EAB Navigate 2.3b 2 point increase in student satisfaction (CCSSE)	4.2 Increase the percentage of admitted students who enroll in the fall term from 29% to 32% through the implementation of expanded student support	4.1a Onboarding services fully implemented 4.2b 3% in admitted students who enroll in fall
2.4 Increase fall-to-spring persistence from 73% to 74.5% through expanded student support by Sept. 2021	2.4a 50% of new students use Pathways Hub and EAB Navigate 2.4b 1.5% increase in fall-to-spring persistence	4.3 Increase fall-to-spring persistence from 76% to 78% through expanded student support by Sept. 2023	4.3a Early alert and interventions piloted 4.3b 2% increase in fall-to-spring persistence 4.3c 98% new students enrolled in FYE
Year Three			
3.1 Increase student achievement in gateway courses from 73% to 74% through contextualization and implementation of high impact practices by Sept. 2022	3.1a 24 gateway courses identified and redesigned with high impact instructional practices 3.1b First year experience piloted	4.4 Increase fall-to-fall retention from 50% to 53% through the implementation of comprehensive technological services by Sept. 2023	4.4a Website contextualized for Guided Pathways 4.4b 3% increase in fall-to-fall retention
3.2 Increase the percentage of admitted students who enroll in the fall term from 26% to 29% through the implementation of expanded student support by Sept. 2022	3.2a 98% new students receiving services in Pathways Hub 3.2b Onboarding services piloted 3.3b 3.0% increase in admitted students who enroll in fall	4.5 Decrease the percentage of students with excess credits at graduation from 94% to 89% through Pathways to the Future by Sept. 2023	4.5b Navigate data analytics piloted student risk analysis 4.5c 5% decrease in students with excess credits at graduation
3.3 Increase fall-to-spring persistence from 74.5% to 76% through expanded student support by Sept. 2022	3.3a 98% of new students have academic plans 3.3b 1.5% increase in fall-to-spring persistence	4.6 Increase 3-year graduation rate from 13% to 15% through the implementation of <i>TCL Pathways to the Future</i> by Sept. 2023	4.56a Guided Pathways available on all campuses and online 4.6b 2% increase in 3-year graduation rate

D. Implementation Plan and tactics (See sample template)

*See attachment Focus Area A*

E. Resources

*See attached template-Focus Area A*

F. Key performance indicators

*See attachment-Focus Area A*

2. Strategic Focus Area: **Enhance recruitment and retention of under-represented populations**

A. Objective

*The objective is to enhance student recruitment in 2 ways:*

1. *Increase enrollment of underrepresented student populations.*
2. *Increase applications and registrations in programs with low enrollment.*
3. *Reach growing Hispanic population in our service area.*

B. Describe alignment with institutional goals

*This aligns with institutional goals because it will allow us to cultivate and/or enhance relationships of respect with underrepresented communities and promote stewardship. It will make us accountable to the growing community at large and the businesses that are relying on us to provide a certified workforce.*

C. Success criteria



*Success will be measured by increased enrollment of diverse student populations and increase in enrollment of struggling programs.*

*Underrepresented populations include:*

- 1. Males*
- 2. Black Males*
- 3. Hispanic/Latino population*

*Programs with low enrollment will be identified by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Academic Deans.*

- D. Implementation Plan and tactics (See sample template)  
*See attached-Focus Area B*
- E. Resources  
*See attached-Focus Area B*
- F. Key performance indicators  
*See attached-Focus Area B*

FY 2022/23 to 2025/26 Enrollment and Retention Targets

	FA 2022	FA 2023	FA 2024	FA 2025	FA 2026
Enrollment Target	2,140	2,230	2,320	2,410	2,500
Retention Rate Target	51%	53%	58%	61%	64%

Enrollment is the total number of students registered in a given academic unit at a given time.

Retention rate is the percentage of students who continue in the academic unit the next year. For example, a student who studies in the fall semester and keeps on studying in the program in the next fall semester is counted in this rate.



Sample Unit Implementation Plan

Focus Area	Steps	Description	Timeline	Primary Actor	Resources	Assessment/Measure
B		<b>Increase enrollment of underrepresented populations and students in CTE programs</b>				
	1	Hire a Bilingual Admissions/Recruiter Position	Year 1	HR, VP of EM, Director of Admissions	Institutional and State support	Increase enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students
	2	Recruitment of a diverse Student Ambassador program	ongoing	Recruiter, campus wide referrals, marketing	Institutional support, foundation	Increased representation of underserved populations as student am
	3	Expand connections with faith based organizations	ongoing	Recruiter, Staff, Faculty	Marketing dollars	Attend 2-3 Faith based events per semester
	4	Expand connections with community groups that serve underrepresented populations	ongoing	Recruiter, Admissions staff	Marketing dollars	Increase enrollment of students in underrepresented populations
	5	Work closely with the office of Diversity and Inclusion on recruitment events	ongoing	Recruiter, DI office, Faculty	Institutional support	Increase enrollment of students in underrepresented populations
	6	Develop recruitment strategies and Marketing plans for CTE programs-Target low enrollment programs with excellent transfer or professional outcome opportunities	ongoing	Marketing, B and I/CUL Deans and Faculty, Recruiter	Institutional support, marketing dollars	Increase enrollment of students in CTE programs
	7	Poster campaigns at High Schools, Libraries, recreation departments	Year 1	Marketing	Marketing dollars	Increase application numbers