SWIC
SOUTHWESTERN™
ILLINOIS COLLEGE

2025-2030

Strategic
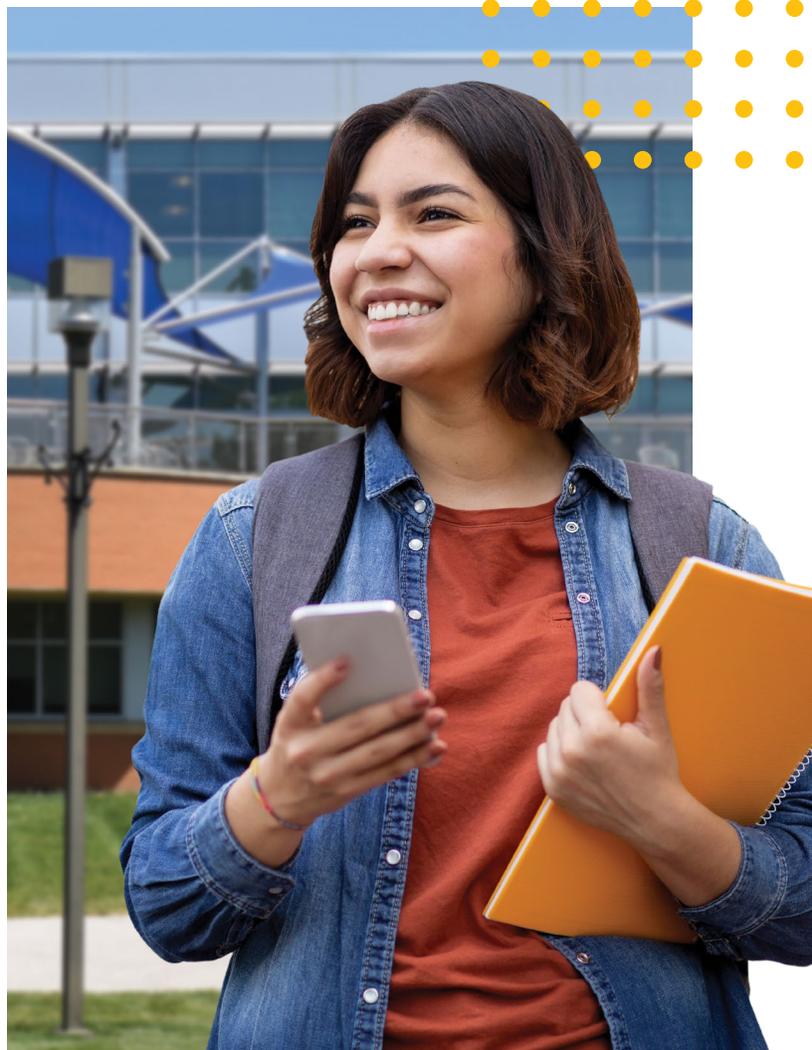# Plan

Table of Contents

Message from the President

Dear SWIC College Community,

I am proud to introduce the new 2025-2030 Strategic Plan to our campus community. We have faced significant barriers in the last four years; in spite of this, SWIC faculty and staff have worked tirelessly as individuals and as a collective to overcome these challenges and continue bringing teaching excellence and first-rate service to our students.

Recent unprecedented global events led to the abrupt but necessary expansion of learning modalities offered here at the institution. The adaptability, diligence, and overall symbiotic response of the students, faculty, staff, and community has been truly commendable and prompted positive change—not only in the ways we teach and serve students but the ways we as staff support one another in our joint endeavors. These trying times have not been in vain but rather strengthened our resolve to promote high-quality, affordable education for the shared success of students, the college, and the community. This commitment is evident in the strategic plan.

The immediate need to adapt to dynamic cultural, economic, and health conditions highlighted the necessity for innovative, adaptable planning and served as a catalyst for the re-evaluation of SWIC's Mission and Values and the addition of a Vision statement which reflects these principles. The Board of Trustees championed the discussion and modifications of these statements, and we believe regular self-reflection is healthy and critical in assessing whether the college is serving our region in the most effective ways. Central to this self-reflection is our responsibility to foster equity and intentionally inclusive practices. Dedicated resources are one part of the solution but also require concerted efforts to facilitate truly holistic inclusion.

As a community college, we play a vital role in the success and sustainability of our region and its economy; therefore, it is crucial that we, too, exemplify sustainable practices. At our core, we have a responsibility to our students and our community to use the tools at our disposal to make data-informed, collaborative decisions that facilitate growth—whether that be for the individual through lifelong learning and pathways to living wage employment or for the region and local industry through a strong, qualified workforce. To that end, the institution is committed to continuous improvement enabled by the new, revised strategic plan and will embrace data-driven innovation in order to effectively empower students and meet the dynamic needs of its district residents.

I look forward to these opportunities for the continued progress of SWIC, its students, and its community as a result of the perseverance and dedication of the campus community to the Mission, Vision & Values and 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Nick Mance

President, Southwestern Illinois College

Executive Summary

Planning Process Overview

Evaluate

The previous strategic plan was evaluated in light of 50+ peer institutions' strategic plans and related documents. A new charter, timeline, template, and teams were created to guide the planning process to create a new plan for fiscal years 2025-2030. Conscious efforts were made to ensure the new plan aligns seamlessly with HLC accreditation criteria.

Revise

The Board of Trustees reviewed and updated the Mission, Vision, & Values to better reflect SWIC's role to its students, community, partners, and stakeholders. Individual meetings with SWIC leadership and input from faculty week sessions helped identify areas of improvement, division roles, and general feedback tied to the Mission, Vision, & Values edits.

Analyze

All data that was collected from the student, staff, and community surveys was compiled into comprehensive spreadsheets for analysis. The Data Collection Team noted consistent responses and trends and cross-walked the results of these focused surveys to other internal and external tools.

Review

The writing team shared the preliminary strategic plan draft with the Board of Trustees, staff, students, and other stakeholders for final minor edits and general feedback. The final draft of the plan was crafted with the additional feedback, comments, and edits in mind.

Implement

Divisional, tactical, and operational plans stemming from the guiding priorities of the strategy are used to reinforce the plan and establish tangible objectives, activities, budgets, and success metrics.

Communicate

Various strategic planning teams (i.e., Data Collection, Writing, Communication) were created and debriefed on their contributions to the process. A communication plan was drafted to update students, staff, and stakeholders on upcoming Board changes to the Mission, Vision, & Values and other strategic plan progress/initiatives.

Collect

The Data Collection Team generated student, staff, and community input surveys. The relevant topics were identified based on highlighted priorities from Institutional Research data. Community surveys were distributed to SWIC constituents through a mailed postcard with QR code to the survey link.

Synthesize

Major findings and datapoints were communicated to the writing team for further analysis and to brainstorm clear categories and subcategories in direct relation to the stated prioritizes of the students, staff, and community. The writing team utilized the template to create a draft for further feedback.

Recommend

The final draft of the strategic plan was recommended and submitted to the SWIC Board of Trustees for official approval.

Sustain

An annual plan and interdepartmental planning committee will be created for each year of the strategic plan to ensure alignment across plans, provide internal oversight, and monitor ongoing progress.

Data Collection Methodology

The Data Collection team orchestrated a series of interactive data collection initiatives, playing a pivotal role in shaping our strategic objectives and priorities. These initiatives targeted three key demographics: faculty/staff, students, and the wider community. To further refine our approach, the community demographic was segmented based on their relationship and affiliation with the College.

To inform its efforts, the team analyzed the recently approved Mission, Vision, & Values, as endorsed by the Board of Trustees. They identified meaningful trends from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey, College Wide survey, and data obtained from sources such as the National Community College Benchmark Project and Lightcast Labor Market Analytics (formerly EMSI). A comprehensive list of overarching themes emerged from this analysis which was used to curate the specific set of questions.

To engage and inform stakeholders, a distinctive messaging slogan, **"I was part of the PLAN,"** was crafted. These efforts were accompanied by a strategic dissemination plan that included sharing survey details and the strategic planning process through SWIC's website, social media platforms, and email communications.

As a show of appreciation, faculty and staff were incentivized with promotional materials while a random selection of students received complementary vouchers for the campus café.

The administration of surveys occurred during Spring 2023 for faculty/staff and students with both surveys guaranteeing anonymity and being accessible through email links. For the community, an anonymous survey was rolled out during the summer and fall of 2023, reaching every household within the SWIC district through QR codes printed on postcards.

" I WAS PART OF THE PLAN

Key Takeaways

STUDENTS	1	2	3		4
	Time & Place	Childcare	Communication Affordable Academic Resources	Program Availability Reputation Employment Assistance	
STAFF	Student Success Communication Employee Value Salary & Benefits	Job Training Reputation	Accessibility*	Diversity & Inclusion*	Childcare Planning Involvement Professional Development

*Response was ranked in the same position for students and staff.

Vision

To be students' "first choice" by providing innovative and flexible programs designed to enrich our community and foster economic growth in our region.

Strategic Priorities

1. Student Success
2. Sustainability
3. Collaboration
4. Intentional Inclusion

Values

- Excellence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Student Success
- Value of Education
- Workforce Development

Mission

Southwestern Illinois College upholds the dignity and worth of students, employees and community, which empowers learning and enhances the quality of life.

Strategic Plan
Overview

PRIORITY 1
Student Success

1.1 Educational Opportunities

1.2 Academic Support

1.3 Barrier Reduction

PRIORITY 2
Sustainability

2.1 Employee Retention

2.2 Resource Stewardship

2.3 Innovation

PRIORITY 3
Collaboration

3.1 Communication

3.2 Community Engagement

3.3 Holistic Decision-Making

PRIORITY 4
Intentional Inclusion

4.1 Affordability

4.2 Accessibility

4.3 Diversity
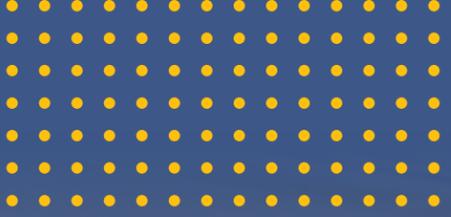
Priority 1
Student Success

GOAL

To provide the highest quality of education centered on student success and enabled by unparalleled teaching excellence, flexible learning environments, and abundant support resources institutionally and through strategic regional partnerships.

1.1 Educational Opportunities

Time & Place

- **Offer** intuitive scheduling options, flexible delivery methods, and convenient locations to facilitate an optimal learning experience for all students.
- **Accommodate** the diverse needs of each of the district's regions through strategically-positioned campus locations.

Program Availability

- **Implement** strategic academic and career pathways that lead to continued education, transfer to a 4-year institution, and/or living-wage employment.
- **Maintain** and expand offerings supported by student and community interest, industry needs, labor market data, and standardized viability analysis.

Instructional Excellence

- **Deliver** engaging, high-quality teaching strategies in accordance with standardized academic rigor policies.
- **Promote** an inclusive, safe learning environment and employ experiential learning opportunities and instructional technologies.

Strategic Measures

- New programs
- Retention, Persistence, and Completion
- Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment opportunities
- General Education completion
- Pathways models
- Transfer enrollment

1.2
Academic Support

Academic Resources

- **Identify** opportunities to increase student awareness of and traffic to available academic resources.
- **Pilot** strategies that prioritize convenience, cater to students' needs, and increase resource efficacy.

Student Services

- **Ensure** a seamless student experience by leveraging data, technology, and a customer-oriented mindset to improve engagement.
- **Promote** clear, uniform information and user-friendly experiences that support all students across campuses, locations, and modalities.

Professional Skills Development

- **Emphasize** the development of skills specifically identified as high-demand for transfer institutions and program-career pathways by labor market data.
- **Increase** exposure to professional development opportunities for students throughout their education and post-graduation.

Strategic Measures

- Student satisfaction
- Student participation in college activities
- Student interventions
- Work-based learning, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship opportunities

1.3
Barrier Reduction

Childcare

- **Develop** data-informed strategies and high-impact resources to eliminate various barriers due to childcare needs.
- **Identify** potential partnerships that are cognizant of student schedules and proximity.

Job Placement & Transfer Assistance

- **Capitalize** on strengthened industry and 4-year transfer partnerships and continue ongoing relationships in the community for the benefit of students.
- **Establish** pipelines into 4-year institutions/high-volume job placement through collaborative opportunities with employer and transfer partners.
- **Strategize** ways to incentivize employers to hire graduates.

Wellness Resources

- **Advocate** for the well-being of all students by expanding accessibility to and availability of health and wellness resources.
- **Prioritize** mental health services, programs, and partnerships.
- **Identify** strategies to better serve student wellness needs.

Strategic Measures

- Industry Partnerships
- Mental health resources
- Participation in Career Services
- Childcare initiatives
- Partner and alumni donations

Priority 2
Sustainability

GOAL

To embed management practices that intrinsically value college assets—namely, the workforce, available resources, and data access—and promote accountability for the betterment of workplace culture, organizational health, and the overall sustainability of SWIC.

2.1 Employee Retention

Compensation & Benefits

- **Evaluate** compensation structure and ensure procedural transparency.
- **Promote** comprehensive benefits and policies that actively promote holistic wellness and a healthy work-life balance.

Quality Training & Development

- **Ensure** availability and accessibility of high-quality, standardized training for new and existing employees.
- **Deliver** cross-departmental training opportunities and materials.
- **Prioritize** transitional mentorship and succession planning.
- **Promote** regular opportunities for professional development and continuing education for staff.

Recognition

- **Demonstrate** commitment to positive workplace culture through employee empowerment.
- **Develop** strategies to acknowledge and appreciate all roles.
- **Identify** meaningful recognition opportunities and performance incentives for top talent or employees that embody SWIC values/dedication.

Strategic Measures

- Employee turnover
- Faculty and staff satisfaction
- Professional Development training

- Employee recognition initiatives
- New employee survey
- Internal and external compensation review

2.2
Resource Stewardship

Fiscal Planning

- **Align** organizational spending and financial allocations strategically with institutional priorities.
- **Identify** opportunities for external funding that advance the Mission & Vision and support the institution's priorities and responsibility to serve its community.
- **Emphasize** a collaborative, transparent budget process.

Space Utilization

- **Optimize** the utilization of space and physical resources through regular assessment and documentation of available resources.
- **Establish** strategies to accurately identify needs and adequately allocate and acquire space through data-driven, equitable methods.

Maintenance & Inventory

- **Coordinate** interdepartmental efforts to maintain accurate, efficient records for inventory, ticketing, and work orders through effective software utilization.
- **Balance** the prioritization of immediate needs with preparation for future needs and potential unforeseen circumstances.

Strategic Measures

- Annual operating expense
- Sustainability rating
- State and federal grants
- Financial reports
- Capital campaigns
- Space utilization plan

2.3
Innovation

Data-Driven Planning

- **Collect** data mindfully to inform best practices and promote regular process improvement.
- **Increase** the use of data institution-wide and improve the accessibility of this information for stakeholders.
- **Promote** data as a tool to continuously improve efficacy.

New Research & Policy Awareness

- **Encourage** participation and engagement in professional communities to promote continuous improvement, exploration of emerging ideas, and expansion of resources for the benefit of students, staff, and the community.

Current & Emerging Technologies

- **Integrate** relevant technologies to streamline business processes, bolster effective, high-quality instruction, and maintain adaptable, immersive learning environments.
- **Weigh** technological efficacy with cost and training for proficiency.

Strategic Measures

- Strategic measure dashboard
- Institutional Research data
- Security standard rating
- AI implementation

Priority 3
Collaboration

GOAL

To cultivate a healthy campus community united by a common vision and strengthened by multifaceted perspectives for the holistic benefit of all students, employees, partners, and district residents through authentic transparency, meaningful engagement, shared governance, and single-minded commitment to cooperation at all levels, both internally and externally.

3.1
Communication

Student Communication

- **Maintain** transparent, concise, and professional communication with students.
- **Create** consistency in every mode of institutional communication to students.
- **Foster** approachable, accessible, and compassionate opportunities for student engagement and provide clear, standardized communication of student expectations.

Employee Communication

- **Employ** systematic, transparent communication about high-level institutional projects and decisions to all employee stakeholder groups.
- **Improve** all modes of professional communication (e.g., top-down dissemination of information, campus-wide emails, peer-to-peer communication, etc.).
- **Increase** frequency of interdepartmental communication/collaboration and progress updates from direct reports to supervisors and amongst peers.
- **Enforce** the use of appropriate channels and processes for approval.

External Communication

- **Maintain** multiple avenues of transparent, professional communication that bolsters SWIC's public image.
- **Seek** feedback and input from district residents and community members to maintain relevance and engagement.
- **Promote** institutional achievements, academic and non-credit offerings, and community-wide events.

Strategic Measures

- College-wide satisfaction
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) data
- Lead Conversion rates
- Internal communication

3.2
Community Engagement

Employer & Industry Relationships

- **Develop** effective and efficient coursework/credentialing opportunities to meet employer needs.

- **Foster** stronger partnerships in high-demand industries and develop flexible scheduling and delivery methods to accommodate employer needs.

Expanded K-12 & Transfer Partnerships

- **Enhance** talent pipelines by increasing K-12 exposure to SWIC.
- **Augment** dual credit offerings, youth summer camps, and collaboration with in-district schools.
- **Strengthen** relationships with SWIC's top ten transfer school partners.

On-Campus Engagement Activities

- **Expand** relevant, in-demand community education programming.
- **Increase** foot-traffic on campus and exposure to SWIC through strategic events and engagement opportunities.

Strategic Measures

- High school senior matriculation rate
- Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment
- Community Education
- Community and Outreach events

3.3
Holistic Decision-Making

Planning Involvement

- **Reinforce** a workplace culture where faculty and staff feel included and heard.
- **Identify** internal/external stakeholders and (re)organize work groups to include all relevant stakeholders.

Shared Governance

- **Commit** to shared governance principles in high-level decision-making.
- **Emphasize** joint responsibility, transparency, and shared accountability.
- **Prioritize** processes and structures that champion a multitude of perspectives and institution-wide representation.

Interdepartmental Cooperation

- **Implement** strategies for collaboration across all areas/levels that prioritize the Mission, Vision & Values and continuous improvement.
- **Utilize** the combined knowledge/expertise of diverse departments to find creative solutions and generate buy-in.

Strategic Measures

- Internal and external feedback processes
- Sustainability plan
- Strategic Planning progress meetings
- Institutional update sessions

Priority 4

Priority 4

Intentional Inclusion

GOAL

To actively deliver policies, programs, and opportunities that deliberately seek input, participation, and representation from underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized communities to create a culture of belonging for all members of the campus community and foster an equitable educational environment.
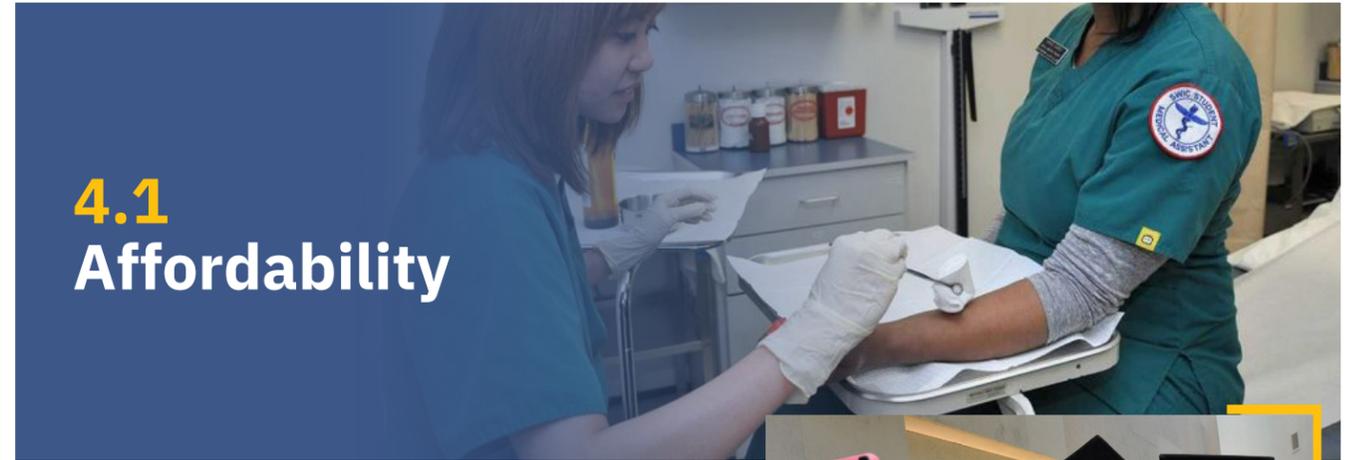
4.1 Affordability

Scholarship Opportunities

- **Invest** in targeted scholarship opportunities for a variety of programs and populations with a focus on underrepresented populations.
- **Identify** additional avenues for financial aid opportunities and incorporate scholarship and stipend awards into potential grant applications where possible.

New Funding Sources

- **Prioritize** external funding that emphasizes equitable education and targets underserved student success, barrier reduction strategies, and living wage job preparation/placement.
- **Leverage** funding that supports high-quality education through modern equipment and facilities while maintaining low-cost tuition.

Experiential Learning

- **Facilitate** hands-on, affordable pathways to employment by developing innovative pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and professional credentialing opportunities in collaboration with local unions, workforce agencies, and industry partners.
- **Foster** partnerships that capitalize on concurrent work-based learning opportunities and minimize the time needed to complete programming and acquire employment.

Strategic Measures

- Tuition rates
- Financial aid
- Paid work-based learning opportunities
- Open Education Resource usage
- FAFSA completion rates
- Endowment portfolio

4.2
Accessibility

Physical Accessibility

- **Ensure** each campus location offers programming identified as both high demand for students and local industry/region.
- **Employ** innovative tactics, such as cohort models, to ensure appropriate program scheduling for various locations.
- **Evaluate** Disability & Access-related needs and compliance regularly.

Learning Accommodations

- **Review** all academic accommodations available and promote increased awareness of accommodations to students/community.
- **Explore** additional accommodation potential or improvement.

Course Offerings & Materials

- **Increase** online/hybrid course offerings where relevant and continue to improve the quality and clarity of resources and materials available through the learning management system.
- **Link** students to high-quality online learning resources and produce new materials to enhance student success.

Strategic Measures

- Student enrollment at each campus location
- Scheduling initiatives
- Employee awareness training
- Programming at each campus and location

4.3
Diversity

Talent Acquisition

- **Model** inclusive practices to attract diverse talent.
- **Employ** high-impact strategies for outreach, recruitment, hiring, and retaining employees from diverse populations.
- **Reflect** the diversity of the student and regional population in staff and faculty hires.

Professionally Underrepresented

- **Develop** strategies to increase racial and gender diversity in disciplines and programs/industries where those demographics are underrepresented.
- **Incentivize** employers to recruit students from demographics that are professionally underrepresented in their industry.

Historically Underserved Populations

- **Identify** ways of ensuring that persistence, retention, and overall success rates of students from underserved populations mirror other populations.
- **Seek** collaborative relationships with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion community/transfer/employer partners.
- **Foster** a culture of belonging for all, particularly underserved students.

Strategic Measures

- Reported sense of belonging
- Equity Inclusion plan
- Certificates and degrees for underrepresented students
- DEI community partners
- Diverse talent acquisition
- Underrepresented student enrollment
- Course success rates

Key Contributors

Strategic Planning Leadership Teams

Sincere thanks go to all SWIC Employees, Students, Partners, and Community Members for your input and support!

Board Of Trustees

President's Cabinet

Strategic Planning Committee

Strategic Planning Team

Instructional Leadership

Campus Leadership

Higher Learning Commission Executive Committee

Retention, Persistence, & Completion Committee

Faculty Development Committee

Student Services Committee

Assessment Team

Communication Team

Data Collection Team

Writing Team

SWIC Foundation

Advisory Boards

Faculty Week Participants

Strategic Plan Survey Participants