

Mt Hood Community College Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

Executive Summary

During the 2020-21 academic year MHCC had been in a four-year enrollment loss cycle. This loss overall had a substantial impact on the college in which regular tuition increases and program eliminations had become a reality and had impacted the college's ability to invest in opportunities to improve the enrollment, finances, and outcomes for the college.

Following a year in which seven academic programs had been eliminated and over 33% of our overall enrollment had been lost, the college was very interested in creating a path forward that would lessen the tuition increases, improve retention, and provide enrollment stability to ensure financial health of the college.

Engagement was at the core of the process as over sixty-five college employees and hundreds of students' collective feedback was introduced and used in the process. Additionally, this process overlapped in timing with the development of MHCC's New Strategic Plan. The opportunity to overlap and collaborate on these plans together provided not only sharable data in both internal and external environmental scans but also provided valuable student insights for the Strategic Planning Process.

Organizational structure for planning and focus areas

Mt. Hood Community College contracted with RNL to develop a strategic enrollment plan. The RNL approach to strategic enrollment planning includes four phases.



Phase I

The MHCC Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) project began by establishing leaders and a broad group of campus participants to guide the planning process. Vice Presidents John Hamblin and Al McQuarters led the planning project. Five working groups were identified as focus areas for the strategic planning. Each working group chair also served on the SEP Steering Committee which guided the strategic planning project.

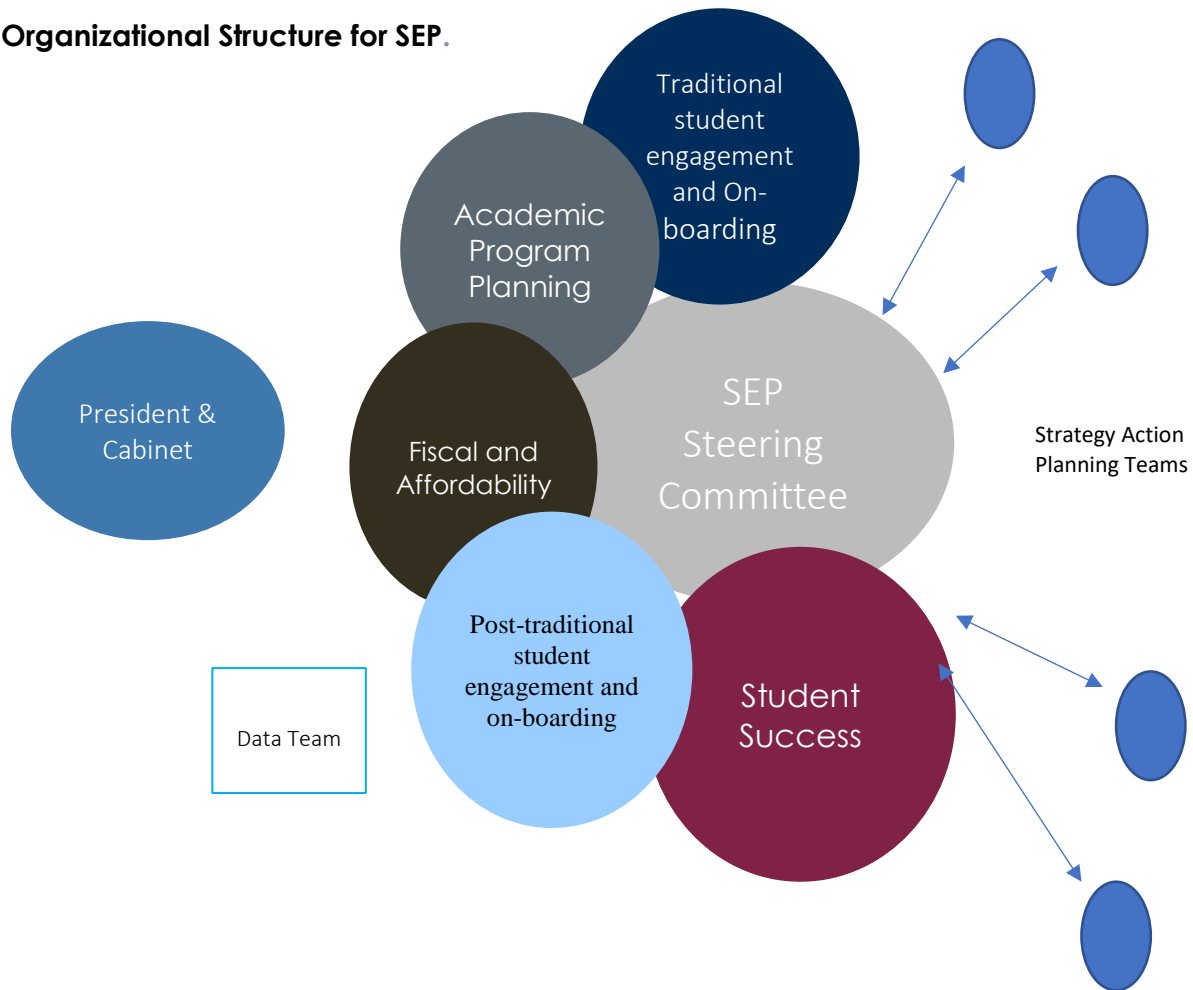
Organizational Structure for SEP

The five working groups were charged with documenting the current situation from focused perspectives. The working groups included: Academic Program Planning; Fiscal and Affordability;

Post-traditional student engagement and on-boarding; Student Success and Traditional student engagement and on-boarding.

A chair of each working group served on the SEP Steering Committee to coordinate the work of the working groups and ultimately the integration of enrollment strategies. The SEP project leaders led the Steering Committee and served as liaisons to the President and Cabinet. Focus area details and working group member names are included in the appendix.

Organizational Structure for SEP.



Planning Assumptions and Ideal Outcomes

When launching a comprehensive project such as SEP, it is essential, to begin with, the end in mind; the ideal outcomes of the project were considered in advance of the planning. During the first SEP session the President, cabinet, and SEP Steering Committee developed a comprehensive list of planning assumptions and ideal outcomes. The list of planning assumptions and ideal outcomes included:

- Establish unity across with all enrollment strategies.
- Clarify MHCC value proposition and reinforce brand.
- Articulate brand across campus and in all student communication.
- Authentic connection with the community – position Mt. Hood as a solution in the region (address generational poverty).
- Increase capacity for community engagement and recruitment (determine recruitment skillset and appropriate structures for relationship building).
- Establish accountability - tie investments to measurable outcomes - track initiatives.
- Align planning efforts and connection at all levels and units (create synergy and a unified perspective, silo span in SEP tasks).
- Adopt big picture perspectives and clarity of how everyone connects to the vision.
- Determine who are the MHCC students, where are the gaps among students and build strategies for addressing the gaps.
- Provide focus and ability to say NO – Prioritize with timelines.
- Develop college-wide benchmarks (KPIs).
- Support student financial literacy, be intentional in student understanding of affordability and cost.
- Reveal the MHCC sweet spot for enrollment.
- Identify common agreement for MHCC investments (staffing, facilities, advertising, student services, etc....) build consensus.
- Equity in SEP is a priority.
- Create consensus – create a campus community – shared universal sense of purpose.
- Welcome new/fresh perspectives.
- Provide clarity of priority criteria relative to investment.
- Intentionally align priorities with changing demographics for the community and district.
- Establish a campus-wide shared understanding and roles of enrollment planning.
- Anchor the SEP based on the community and Mt. Hood experience.
- Know what other colleges are doing and be confident in actions are best for Mt. Hood.
- Develop a realistic understanding of who are stakeholders.
- Determine how diversity, equity, and inclusion inform enrollment strategies.
- Cultivate a "data-informed" strategic enrollment culture.
- Be Inclusive with every SEP/enrollment process; and
- Establish campus-wide literacy regarding credit/non-credit revenue streams.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators were identified to guide the planning process and the completed strategic enrollment plan. Five key performance indicators were identified with details regarding the metrics for each category.

Category	Key Performance Indicator
Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual FTE / Headcount • New students • Continuing enrollment
Student Shape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of underserved populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Post-traditional (include online) – by demographics – geography – income levels – adult – direct from HS
Program Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rates • SSI • Fall to Fall retention • Graduation Rate • Facilities • Licensure pass rates • Accreditation • Employer placement rate • Guided pathway metrics
Market Position / Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of HS enrollment to MHCC • % of eligible adults enrolled (attainment in the community) • Perception surveys • Climate surveys • Community connections • Google analytics • Employer surveys • Community need assessments • HS surveys • Bond renewals
Fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Sustainability • Revenue streams • Cost of attendance • Pell eligibility • State grants and aid • Default rates

Situation analysis

The five working groups conducted situational analyses to identify focus areas and opportunities to improve enrollment losses and stabilize enrollment.

As the college experienced enrollment declines greater than 30%, it became extremely timely and valuable to engage in the SEP process and further assess existing opportunities and growth.

The working groups participated in a conference-style launch of the project on September 28 – 29, 2022. The groups began by conducting a SWOT analysis for each respective working group focus area. Each group expanded on the SWOT by analyzing data and revealing MHCC’s unique factors of recruitment, retention and overall student success that result in MHCC enrollment outcomes.

This situation analysis phase of the project included a wide range of voices, from students, staff, faculty and included a collaborative engagement with our partners from MIG who were assisting the college in the Strategic Planning process to ensure alignment with the new strategic plan and build a more cohesive Strategic Enrollment Management Process.

The set of working group situation analyses is included as an appendix to this plan.

Strategies

The six working group situation analyses generated a set of twelve potential enrollment strategies. Action plan teams used an excel workbook to develop business plans for each of the strategies. The workbooks included the steps, timeline and responsible areas for implementing the strategies. The action planning teams identified costs associated with building the strategy as well as projected enrollment impact that could be achieved with the strategy.

	Strategy	Working Group	Concept
1	Increase FAFSA completion rates	Financial Aid Applications and Literacy	Increase grants, awards, loans, financial literacy, and packaging. To yield and retain more students.
2	Focus on external barriers to student enrollment	Student Basic Needs	Increase external grant funding for housing, personal computers, and other student basic needs.
3	Coordinate professional advisors and faculty mentors	Advising	Strengthen advising processes and support infrastructure.
4	Improve retention and persistence	Early Alerts and Persistence	Develop proactive intervention; look at student types, demographics, programs (including 1 st . gen)
5	Prepare for major system enhancements with short and long-term tasks	Systems and Communications	Plan for an updated CRM to enhance MHCC recruitment, align SEP project with future SIS planned enhancements
6	Increase awareness and brand of MHCC	Community engagement	Communication audit, focus on post-traditional, traditional, MHCC value, build awareness and partnership (including k-12 and employers)
7	Address student needs relative to scheduling and delivery of courses	Program flexibility and innovation	Improve persistence by addressing student schedule needs and existing college

			challenges relative to course scheduling and modality.
8	Increase the new student enrollment and improve retention by connecting more students with employment opportunities	Student Employment	Enhance career services, on-campus employment opportunities, and community jobs.
9	Improve agility and foster innovation for program demand	Program Demand / Capacity Alignment	Identify systems and protocols to better position MHCC to address external demands and employer talent needs.
10	Reduce the student MELT (# of students that enroll and drop in the first two weeks)	On-Boarding	Improve orientation, communication, and pro-active engagement to ensure that more enrolled students attend their first semester.
11.	Create a sense of belonging for all MHCC Students	Sense of Belonging	Identify space, activities, and campus actions to better ensure that all students have a sense of belonging at the college.

On March 1, 2022, action plan authors and teams presented their plans to the SEP steering committee and cabinet members.

Academic Innovation

Program Flexibility and Innovation #7

This action plan addressed opportunities for better scheduling courses and programs and delivering courses and programs in modalities that meet student needs. The plan was not fully developed. The projected revenue and required resources need data and analysis to achieve more reliable enrollment projections and thoughtful required resources. This concept is key to achieving long-term sustained enrollment and should continue to be developed with an expanded team and leadership oversight.

Program Demand and Capacity Alignment #9

Improve agility and foster innovation for program demand. Identify systems and protocols to better position MHCC to address external demands and employer talent needs. This plan needs additional data and analysis to better project future enrollment impact. The action planning team included key academic representatives and resulted in meaningful insights to guide program planning at MHCC.

Community Engagement / Branding and Marketing #6

This action plan focused on understanding the perceptions of community stakeholders and developing a communication strategy to highlight the MHCC value proposition and ideally position the college within the community. This plan is foundational to several of the action plans that were pitched. The enrollment projection for this plan is based on new students and increasing the top of the enrollment funnel. The costs associated with this plan include perception focus groups and communication audit followed by the development and implementation of a strategic communication plan that will include communication topics, timing, and modalities. The

communication audit was identified by several action planning teams. Team leaders met on April 4, 2022 to further determine the specific tasks associated with the communication audit and perception assessments.

Financial Application and Literacy #1

This action plan team included deep analysis with institutional research to understand the correlation between FAFSA completion relative to enrollment and completion. The team identified a clear need to enhance financial literacy including available state and federal financial resources for high-need students and opportunities to support more FAFSA completion.

Systems and Communications #5

Identified steps to maintain enrollment as MHCC prepares for major system enhancements. The plan includes short and long-term tasks that will integrate technology system planning with strategic enrollment planning. This plan addresses technology acquisitions such as CRM and SIS enhancements.

Student Employment # 8

Increase the new student enrollment and improve retention by connecting more students with employment opportunities. Enhance career services, on-campus employment opportunities, and community jobs.

On-Boarding #10

Reduce the student MELT (# of students that enroll and drop in the first two weeks). Improve orientation, communication, and pro-active engagement to ensure that more enrolled students attend their first semester.

Sense of Belonging #11

Create a sense of belonging for all MHCC Students. Identify space and virtual approaches to support activities, and campus actions. This initiative includes a campus-wide campaign to better ensure that all students have a sense of belonging at the college.

Pro-active Student Success

Advising #3

Coordination of professional and faculty advisors' tasks and roles. Strengthen advising processes and support infrastructure to ensure a collective impact and proactive student support.

Early Alerts and Persistence #4

Develop proactive intervention; look at student types, demographics, and programs including first-generation students to directly impact student success.

Action Plan Pitch Results

The strategies were organized within the themes of Academic Innovation; Recruitment and Outreach; the Student Journey and Pro-active Student Success.

Academic Innovation

The leadership team determined that the two strategies in the academic innovation category would be integrated with MHCC comprehensive academic planning. The two strategies: 1) Program flexibility and innovation and 2) Program demand and capacity alignment are critical to long-term sustained enrollment growth. This set of SEP enrollment goals does not include opportunities for growth based on academic program enrollment strategies. Mt. Hood Community College will continue to struggle with enrollment until challenges related to program demand and capacity; scheduling programs and courses based on student demand; and creating flexibility and agility to support the regional economic development talent needs and opportunities are resolved.

The Vice President for Instruction will lead teams that will collect additional data and conduct additional analysis to determine need, enrollment impact, and costs associated with the academic innovation and flexibility action plan. The academic flexibility and innovation needs include scheduling courses based on student needs; offering programs entirely in flexible formats that account for student work and family balance; emerging from the pandemic with best practices for distance delivery. Determining and establishing a fully online or hy-flex course and program delivery and online student support infrastructure.

The leadership determined that the \$5,000 investment identified in the program/demand capacity alignment plan to collect demand data should be funded in the 22-23 FY.

Recruitment and Engaged Outreach

Student recruitment and engaged outreach was identified as the area that could immediately help to reduce continued enrollment decline. The leadership team determined that an investment of \$80,000 in a communication audit as well as collection and analysis of perception data would be funded in the 22-23 FY.

The Student Journey

This SEP plan includes the implementation of the financial application and literacy plan (#1). Tasks will be analyzed and distributed among existing staff during the FY 22-23 with careful documentation to measure the net enrollment impact of the financial and affordability strategies relative to total MHCC enrollment. As MHCC is able to positively leverage enrollment with financial aid literacy and communication, additional resources should be invested for long-term sustained enrollment growth.

The leadership team also allocated FY 22-23 budget to support a new system for student employment (plan #8). Additional student success tasks for SEP include:

- Develop implementation dashboards and metrics to assess strategy success.
- Implement plan #5 – Systems and communication with no additional resources in coordination with technology planning.
- Fully implement and institutionalize #10, Sense of Belonging with a \$500 resource request funded.

Pro-active Student Success

- Implement advising strategy and reevaluate required resources for additional years based on year one insights.
- Implement an early alert strategy investing \$25,000 in year one and reassess financial resources required following year one insights.

Student Basic Needs #2

This strategy was not developed into an action plan and should be implemented as a “just do it” given the MHCC investment in a full-time staff positions for this area and the availability of external grants for this area.

Mt Hood Community College Enrollment Goals

Each strategy developed an enrollment projection methodology. The action plan projections were reduced based on risk of failure and deduplication.

Category	Strategy	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
New	Financial	30	45	60	75	90	105
	Onboarding	125	150	175	200	225	250
	Comm & Mktg	15	30	45	60	75	90
	Student Emp	10	25	30	45	50	60
Total Projected New Enrollment from Strategies		180	270	385	475	564	680
Returning	Financial	45	75	90	120	150	180
	Sense of Belonging	30	60	90	120	120	120
	Advising	25	45	60	75	90	120
	Early Alerts	15	20	30	45	60	75
	Student Emp	30	35	40	45	55	65
Total Projected Returning Enrollment from Strategies		145	184	248	326	383	461
Total Projected Enrollment from Strategies		325	454	633	801	948	1141

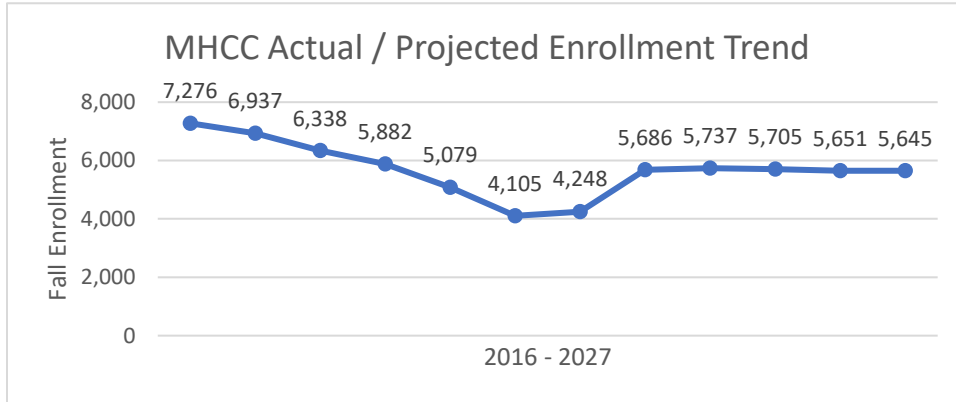
Fall	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Total Credit Head Count	7276	6937	6338	5882	5079	4105	4248	5686	5737	5705	5651	5645

The projected enrollment falls between the level incorporates the RNL projected models that were provided early in the SEP project. The enrollment projections fall between the enrollment projection model levels for decreasing and maintaining market share. The market is expected to decline 16.5% in the next decade. Mild growth is expected in Hispanic markets and 9% growth is anticipated in the adult

markets primarily individuals 35 years of age or older. These demographic insights highlight the importance of the MHCC strategies having a post-traditional focus.

SEP Enrollment Goals

The strategy projections were added



Implementation

Implementation structures have been charged with monitoring and adjusting the strategic enrollment to ensure that that colleges actions are supporting the enrollment goals.

SEM Steering Committee

- Meet monthly
- Rotation of three each month adding more when available review of progress
- Will oversee SEM dashboard and quarterly, annual reviews as well as modification of plan as needed

Action/Implementation Teams

Clearing house for SEP efforts, data tracking and analysis of what is working and what needs adjustments. Set goals using the SEP methodologies of strategy planning.

Team leads of:

- Student employment – increase the number of employed students and continue to monitor persistence of employed students v. college persistence aggregate.
- Advising – track reduction of dropout rates; implement mid-term grades and assess impact on course success; track persistence by sub-populations.
- Early Alerts – integrate EAB with navigate. Update steps and track alert responses and impacts.
- On-boarding – track the number of students participating in orientation experiences; document the number of enrolled students that never attend classes.
- Sense of Belonging – track opportunities for engagement and participation rates align with term-to-term persistence results.

- Basic Needs – continue to obtain external funding and grants for students where available. Track basic need aid use and activity.
- Financial Aid – monitor and decrease the default rate. Reduce financial holds and student account balances. Increase FAFSA and ORSAA workshops offered, audience diversity and attendance. Increase the FAFSA / ORSAA completion rates.
- Marketing and Outreach – audit current communication for prospective students and develop coordinated communication to support recruitment, onboarding, and retention. This team will continue to document the enrollment funnel and assess performance relative to goals for inquiries to applications, applications to admits, admits to enroll and melt.

In closing, MHCC has been experiencing a multi-year enrollment loss cycle. This loss overall had a substantial impact on the college in which regular tuition increases and program eliminations had become a reality and has impacted the college's ability to invest in opportunities to improve the enrollment, finances, and outcomes for the college.

Over this period of enrollment loss, MHCC lost 33% of our overall enrollment, the college is very committed in creating a path forward that would lessen the tuition increases, improve retention, and provide enrollment stability to ensure financial health of the college.

Engagement has been at the core of the process as over sixty-five college employees and hundreds of students' collective feedback was introduced and used in the process. Additionally, this process overlapped in timing with the development of MHCC's New Strategic Plan. The opportunity to overlap and collaborate on these plans together provided not only sharable data in both internal and external environmental scans but also provided valuable student insights for the Strategic Planning Process. While we can rarely predict what the future may bring, the development and implementation of this plan provides MHCC an opportunity to move into that future with clear direction and the needed support to move impactful initiatives forward.