

**TRINITY VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STRATEGIC LEARNING PLAN
2007-2010**



**DRAFT SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE TVCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
APRIL 24, 2006**

**TRINITY VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STRATEGIC LEARNING PLAN 2007-2010**

MISSION STATEMENT

Trinity Valley Community College is a *learning-centered college* that provides quality academic, workforce, and community service programs to meet the educational needs of our students and the citizens of our service area.

Introduction

Trinity Valley Community College has provided quality education and training for both students and citizens in its service area since its founding in 1946. In that time, the College has grown from a single campus of 311 students and 12 faculty members, primarily from Henderson County, to a four-campus District with 5,664 students with 124 full-time faculty in fall 2005. Students now come from across the service area, the state of Texas, the United States, and foreign countries. The Athens campus enrolled 2,680, the TVCC-Terrell campus enrolled 1,117 students, TVCC-Palestine enrolled 1,062, the Texas Department of Corrections location enrolled 537, the TVCC-Health Science Center in Kaufman enrolled 357, and the remaining students enrolled at other locations. TVCC is committed to its mission as a learning-centered college that will adapt to the changing trends in higher education to serve the citizens of Henderson, Kaufman, Rains, Van Zandt, and Anderson counties in East Texas.

In 2005, the Strategic Planning Committee began to research and to compile a four-year plan for TVCC that is consistent with the unique history and needs of the College as well as the statewide strategic plan for colleges and universities known as *Closing the Gaps*. The plan for TVCC identifies four critical goals that include fostering a *learning culture* that values quality of instruction and committing to *outreach* among local communities while ensuring *success* of students by providing a *diverse* learning environment. The goals learning culture, outreach, success, and diversity are described in greater detail in the following plan. These areas will become more critical given the rapid demographic changes occurring in Texas, which include the population within the state surging by 24.3% in 2015 and 41.7% by 2025, from a base of 20.8 million in 2000 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB] 2004).

Within the service area many of the statewide trends will become more evident over the next ten years, and failure to plan to address those changes now may lead to a difficult economic and political future. An important trend is the emergence of Texas as a minority-majority state in 2005. The growth of populations that have been historically underrepresented in higher education is expected to continue. At present, service area public schools report increasing numbers of Hispanic students similar to trends across the state. Moreover, the number of economically as well as academically disadvantaged students has continued to increase locally and statewide. The state has identified the education of those populations as vital to the social and economic security of Texas. State demographer Steve Murdock projects 78% of the state's population increase through 2040 will be accounted for by Hispanics, while only 4.2% of the increase will come from whites and 5.6% from blacks. When evaluating the age of Texans in the future, it is projected that minorities will represent 62.7% of the 18 to 25 year old population by 2020 (38.4%

being Hispanics); whereas, in 2000 this population numbered 32%. Given the nexus between individual as well as public prosperity and an educated workforce, the role of TVCC in providing education and training to an increasingly diverse population will become vital to the future of our communities.

Strategic Plan Goals

GOAL #1: LEARNING

Trinity Valley Community College will place student learning as the primary design principle in every College policy, procedure, plan, and action.

Student learning is the center piece of Trinity Valley Community College's mission, and the College will seek innovative ways to deliver on this promise to our students and ourselves. This greater emphasis upon learning places a higher premium on learning results for students both individually and collectively. It also creates new challenges for instructors, administrators, and TVCC as a whole to create a culture that transforms students into engaged learners. For TVCC, the learning-centered model stresses the internal development that takes place for learners as a result of experiences in the learning environment. TVCC will emphasize effecting changes in students by engaging them as full partners in the learning process through the creative application of a variety of learning options by forming and participating in collaborative learning activities, defining roles to correspond to the needs of learners, documenting improved learning, and nurturing an organizational culture or environment that is receptive and reactive to change as it relates to learning (O'Banion, 1997, pp. 204-207).

TVCC faculty, staff, and administrators function as facilitators and supporters of the learning process. One example is the TVCC Learning Initiative, launched in 2005 in order to reaffirm a campus-wide commitment to student learning with a special emphasis upon engagement and reading. The Learning Initiative is dedicated to identifying student needs and developing programs to support student learning.

The College provides courses, training, or certification that directly correlate to enhanced learning, new skill sets leading to the acquisition of a job, or increased earnings. Currently, students transferring to universities perform well when compared to other students, yet improvement is a paramount objective that never ceases for TVCC. Second, though less obvious, the College fosters learning indirectly by creating lifelong learners that benefit the community. Community colleges have been shown to contribute to their service area in the form of lower crime rates, reduced unemployment, less dependency upon state and federal monetary assistance, and improved health or lifestyle habits (Christopherson & Robinson, 2002, p. 1).

Critical Success Factors:

- 1.1--Become a more learning-centered institution.
- 1.2--Increase student engagement in collegiate life.

1.3--Provide instruction, academic support, and student services that enhance student learning inside and outside the classroom.

1.4--Identify one or more instructional or service program that will be recognized by an accepted authority as excellent within the state of Texas or the nation.

1.5--Increasingly engage in data-based decision making at the student, course, department, and institutional level.

GOAL #2 – OUTREACH

Increase the outreach of TVCC through a variety of affordable services and programs, while ensuring that resources are available to meet the needs of students and faculty.

With four campus locations, TVCC is uniquely positioned to meet the constantly changing needs of students in our service area, including preparing students for transfer to a university and providing opportunities for students to obtain basic skills, refresher courses, non-credit programs, certificates, or associate degrees. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) statewide plan, *Closing the Gaps*, Texas currently lags behind the ten most populous states in enrollment of its college-eligible population (p. 5). The *Closing the Gaps*' enrollment target is 5.7% of the college-eligible population for both two- and four-year schools. Throughout the five-county service area, TVCC is the leading college of choice among college-eligible students compared to other community colleges and universities (THECB). Enrollment from three of the five counties within the service area, including Henderson, Kaufman, and Van Zandt counties, surpassed statewide targets. Both Anderson and Rains counties did not achieve the 5.7% figure. While the College will remain dedicated to reaching this goal in each of our counties within the service area, TVCC is committed to meeting the needs where demand is highest while attempting to enhance its capacity to meet its goal in Anderson and Rains counties. Demand for services and programs offered by TVCC varies from county to county. The growth and changing face of TVCC's service area population will impact this demand in the future. The total service area population has grown from a base of 256,978 persons in 2000 to 283,740 in 2004. During this period, Rains County increased from 21.1% (9,139 to 11,066), Kaufman County increased 19.7% (71,313 to 85,377), 8.1% in Henderson County (73,277 to 79,184), 8% in Van Zandt County (48,140 to 51,996), and 1.8% in Anderson (55,109 to 56,117). Projections for growth mirror the patterns of the recent past, with the largest total growth among the college-age population occurring in Kaufman County.

The prospect of higher enrollment poses many challenges to outreach given the recent budgetary challenges in Texas. This dilemma, coupled with increasing numbers of service area students who are economically and/or academically disadvantaged, indicates that TVCC will need to provide more with less. The number of students in service area schools identified as economically disadvantaged has risen over the last ten years, with the largest growth in that population being at Athens ISD (17.9 % growth 39% to 56.9%) and Palestine ISD (17.1 % growth from 49% to 66.1%). In 2005, at least half of the public school students were classified as economically disadvantaged in 14 of the 28 schools in

our service area. In fall 2005, 29.2% of currently enrolled TVCC students were classified as economically disadvantaged, and 28% received need-based financial aid.

Meeting the needs of students in this growing and changing population will be a challenge, as 34.2% of all currently enrolled TVCC students need remediation, as do 41% of new TVCC students. These pressures have already stretched resources and will pose challenges to student learning by forcing teachers to create new cognitive structures, or innovative teaching practices, to address changing learning styles and values based upon socio-economic status (Payne, pps. 119-125). The stated expectations of the THECB in *Closing the Gaps* indicate that TVCC and other community colleges will serve as the vanguard in reaching out to our community by continuing to offer high quality, affordable education and training.

By offering multiple learning opportunities in traditional as well as non-traditional settings, targeting highly needed programs in the job market, and strategically increasing overall enrollment, TVCC stands ready to facilitate student learning and enhance the socio-economic climate of the service area. The unemployment rate in the TVCC service area has fluctuated through the years and currently stands at 3.3% (2000) compared to Texas' at 3.8% and the U.S. at 3.7%. Though the unemployment rate for our service area does not demonstrate a great disparity, the estimated average per capita income for each county (2003) is below the state (\$19,617) and the nation (\$21,587), ranging from \$13,838 in Anderson county to \$18,827 in Kaufman county.

Many success stories offer a positive demonstration of the impact of the community college. For example, unemployment dropped 12.7% and 21.7% in Hidalgo and Starr counties, respectively, since the 1993 creation of South Texas College (Reed, 2003, para. 5). Shirley Reed, President of South Texas College, testified before the U.S. House of Representatives that "groups with the lowest enrollment and graduation rates will constitute an increasingly larger portion of the Texas population in the future, and if those gaps are not closed Texas will have proportionally fewer college graduates" (2003, para. 10). Though the local economy of South Texas may differ from East Texas, a recent economic impact study indicates that TVCC distributes \$11.9 million in salaries to employees, and infuses an additional \$80 million in wages and salaries into the economy annually. Additionally, students receive \$7.64 in return for every \$1 they invest in TVCC, and taxpayers recover all annual investments in 6.4 years. The State of Texas benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment, and crime, saving the public some \$2.9 million per year (Christopherson & Robinson, 2002, p. 1). If TVCC is to continue to have an impact on our communities in the face of economic and demographic shifts, the College must continue to emphasize reaching out in innovative ways.

Critical Success Factors:

2.1--TVCC will increase enrollment in high-need programs.

2.2--Enrollment will include at least 5.7% of the college-eligible population.

2.3--TVCC will increase the amount of institutional financial assistance for students.

GOAL #3 – SUCCESS***Identify and support the success of TVCC students through retention and graduation.***

Trinity Valley Community College values outreach to our community as an important means to get students in the door and to enhance our relationship with the community. Nevertheless, our promise to become a learning-centered college is realized when students are successful in attaining their educational goals and meeting the economic, social, and cultural needs of our region. Other indicators of student success may also include retention and graduation. These measures serve as an initial point of inquiry into TVCC's success. These areas are indirect measures of student learning and serve as a barometer for the College to evaluate its success in meeting student needs. As William Bowen, former President of Princeton University, remarked in a recent interview, "The United States has always said it believes in opportunity and social mobility and fairness. If you find that the odds of getting through are very different for different groups of people, that's something you ought to be concerned about" ("Focus on Getting Students," 2005, para. 7).

TVCC will analyze graduation and retention trends in targeted programs and among a variety of student populations, including particular ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged, and academically disadvantaged. Identifying these trends as well as addressing the needs of specific populations and programs as they arise will ensure that the needs of all students in the service area are met. In cases where gaps are observed, TVCC will work to increase retention and graduation rates for those groups. More complex measures of success are expected to emerge as the College continues on its path to become a learning-centered institution. Delivering on our promise to provide quality learning experiences and being an innovator in higher education will secure the future for our students and the community.

Critical Success Factors:**3.1--Increase retention rates of students.**

3.1.1—Increase retention rates of students who intend to complete a program of study.

3.1.2-- Increase retention rates of students who do not intend to complete a program of study.

3.2--Increase completion rates of students.

3.2.1—Increase completion rates of students who intend to complete a program of study.

3.2.2-- Increase completion rates of students who do not intend to complete a program of study.

3.3--Increase the graduation rate of high-need academic transfer and workforce programs.

3.4--Increase the proportion of Associate of Arts graduates who transfer to Texas public universities within one year of program completion.

3.5--Increase the proportion of Associate of Applied Sciences graduates and Certificate completers who obtain employment in their chosen field of study within one year of program completion.

3.6--To be a leader and innovator in economic and community development.

GOAL #4 – DIVERSITY

Trinity Valley Community College will provide a learning environment that supports and encourages diversity.

Providing an environment that encourages diversity plays a critical role in the enhancement of student learning. Encouraging diversity means sharing and understanding the characteristics that differentiate people, including race, gender, age, worldview, socioeconomic status. A diverse learning environment encourages students to appreciate and to value differences due to their experience with and understanding of students from other cultures (Casanova, 1987, p. 227).

The emergence of Texas as a minority-majority state is well documented in educational literature, census projections, and public school reports. Over the last ten years the TVCC service area has experienced unprecedented growth among minority groups. Higher education participation rates among college-eligible black and Hispanic students from the service area fall below participation of other ethnic groups. The trends of our service area are similar to those of the state. TVCC enrolled 5,664 students in fall, 2005. Eighty percent of students were white, 12% African American, 7% Hispanic, and 1% were of other ethnic origin. Sixty percent of our students are female. As these groups become a larger segment of the available labor and leadership pool, failure to recruit, retain, educate and graduate minorities invites an uncertain political and economic future (THECB). Steve Murdock, demographer for the state of Texas, estimates that “if Texas does not close its education racial gap, the average state of Texas household in 2040 will be about \$6,500 a year poorer than in 2000. By then, the poverty rate among family households could increase by three percent” (Reed, 2005, para. 18). TVCC will embrace the diversity challenge as an opportunity to make Texas and the service area a better, economically vibrant place through the recruitment, retention, and graduation of a diverse student body for the creation of an effective learning environment.

Critical Success Factors:

4.1--The TVCC student body will *better represent* the racial and ethnic diversity of its service area.

4.2--The ethnic and racial diversity of the TVCC faculty will *better represent* the ethnic and racial diversity of its student body.

4.3--TVCC faculty and staff will participate in activities that enhance their cultural awareness.

4.4--Students and employees will increasingly report that TVCC has a climate that encourages cultural awareness.