2021 STRATEGIC PLANNING
PROGRESS REPORT

**OZARKS TECHNICAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Mission Statement

The college mission is to provide accessible, high quality and affordable learning opportunities that transform lives and strengthen the communities we serve.

Vision Statement

The college vision is to serve our communities by expanding opportunities for personal and professional growth through our commitment to excellence and innovation.

Core Values

Quality	Inclusion	Integrity
Opportunity	Innovation	Affordability
Accessibility	Collaboration	Personal Growth
Learning	Respect	Professional Growth

table of contents
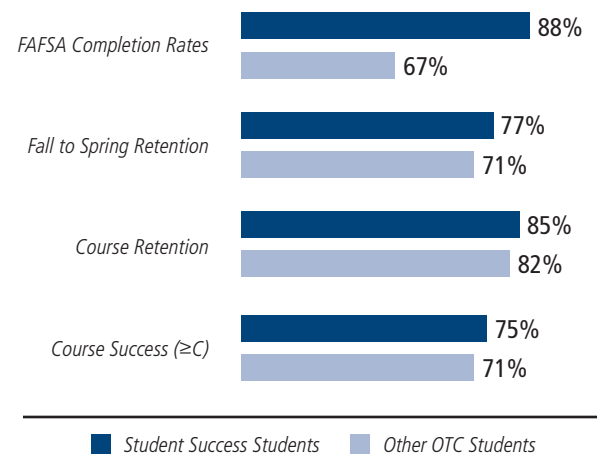
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

Improve experiences at every point in the institution to increase opportunities for students to attain their educational goals.

Goal One: Improve advising support to help students make course and degree selections that will move them toward their educational goals.

Student Success Redesign began first year of implementation

Following the successful pilot, Student Success was officially adopted and began implementation in fall 2020. Student Success centers opened in Technical Education and at all campuses and centers. Navigators and Student Success Specialists proactively served 2,100 students. Students in the program successfully completed their courses at a higher rate than the college average, and there was a 4% increase in the number of students who completed with a grade of C or better. Critically, retention also increased with 77% of student success students being retained from fall 2020 to spring 2021, compared to only 71% of other OTC students. Success in year one has laid the groundwork for continued growth in the 2021-2022 academic year, with implementation campus-wide slated for 2023.

2020-2021 STUDENT SUCCESS IMPACT REPORT

	Student Success Students	Other OTC Students
FAFSA Completion Rates	88%	67%
Fall to Spring Retention	77%	71%
Course Retention	85%	82%
Course Success (≥C)	75%	71%

■ Student Success Students   ■ Other OTC Students

Suggested course sequences redesigned for all programs

Providing a clear path to a degree for students not only saves them time and money, but helps more students succeed in accomplishing their educational goals. To create these clear paths, Academic Affairs reviewed all current course sequence pathways and built easily navigable forms for each program. Students can see recommended courses for each semester. These course sequence pathways not only consider OTC program offerings, but also information about common transfer institution requirements, and scheduling conflicts that can cause students to have to take extra courses. The new pathways have been uploaded into a centralized webpage at catalog.otc.edu and added to each program page.

DELIVERABLES

- Implement an embedded advising model to increase student access to specialized advising support.
- Use external best practices and employee innovation to pilot advising programs, with the creation of an Advising Task Force to review pilot results.
- Utilize the OTC-101 course to provide students with early advising guidance, including financial literacy, college expectations and information literacy.
- Develop sequenced course pathways for every degree and top transfer pathways within the AA degree.

- Improve integration of career guidance into the onboarding process prior to the student's selection of a degree or pathway.
- Provide cost and career information for each OTC degree program to aid students in selection.
- Improve access to relevant information and training for faculty and staff who provide students with advising support.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

Improve experiences at every point in the institution to increase opportunities for students to attain their educational goals.

Goal Two: Provide a campus environment that promotes student learning and success in goal attainment.

Planned for a renewed focus on student life when students return to campus

Student engagement is a critical part of any college campus, but COVID-19 offered an opportunity for this goal group to research and evaluate our current offerings. Student life was growing prior to the disruption, but only a handful of student organizations have been popular at OTC. The group spoke with other institutions and explored new methods for engaging students when they return to campus in fall 2021. Their research culminated in a proposal to Cabinet to formally support student life activities.

Audit of all student communications completed

With the support of Achieving the Dream, OTC staff and faculty members from across the college reviewed all communications students receive from the college. In an effort to best support students through streamlined communications, removing confusing or duplicative communications is critical. The working group mapped all communications students receive throughout their OTC experience. Areas for improvement were identified, and recommendations are being considered as communications are redesigned in conjunction with the implementation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) implementation in the 2021-2022 academic year.

DELIVERABLES

- Increase student life and engagement opportunities at every OTC location, tailored to meet student needs.
- Provide support services and resources that promote a welcoming environment and success in educational goal attainment for a diverse student population.
- Create oversight structure for student communications to ensure they are helpful, timely and relevant.
- Provide a centralized access point for student help requests, allowing for immediate answers to frequently asked questions, and identify resources to aid in college communication efforts.
- Evaluate services at every OTC location to identify opportunities, such as cross-training or colocation of relevant services, to improve student experiences.
- Implement an online system for all OTC students and employees to share feedback and ideas, and evaluate an incentive structure for ideas that improve college operations.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

Improve experiences at every point in the institution to increase opportunities for students to attain their educational goals.

Goal Three: Embrace innovative practices that result in strong levels of student learning and success in courses within programs and college-wide.

Explored teaching and learning at OTC

This goal group conducted research on best practices in supporting teaching and learning. Through guidance from Achieving the Dream, they developed a proposal for a new Teaching and Learning Taskforce. This taskforce would aim to create a framework of teaching and learning, align academic support functions throughout the college, and further support faculty professional development opportunities. The new taskforce will start its work in the 2021-2022 academic year.

DELIVERABLES

- Recognize faculty with high rates of course success and encourage sharing of instructional practices that produce that success.
- Create a faculty center for teaching and learning to promote professional development and the sharing of effective instructional practices.
- Provide forums for faculty and staff to share best practices learned from conference attendance.
- Encourage professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, aligned with institutional priorities and employee feedback.
- Recognize innovative departmental and divisional initiatives that promote student success.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

Improve experiences at every point in the institution to increase opportunities for students to attain their educational goals.

Goal Four: Address barriers to educational access for current and potential students.

Eagle Breakfast fed students and led to stronger academic outcomes
In spring 2021, OTC opened to students with a new campus resource, Eagle Breakfast. Each morning, students could receive a free breakfast from Café 101 on the Springfield campus. The program was open to all students who needed a breakfast, without the requirement to prove need. This proved to be a larger need than even organizers had imagined. Over the course of the semester, the program served 7,500 meals, averaging 110 a day. The program was not only heavily utilized, it also showed higher outcomes than originally anticipated. Of the students who received a breakfast, 78% earned a C or higher in their courses, as compared to 73% of all other students. Successful course completion also increase by 6% over the college average. Through COVID-19 federal funding, OTC will continue the program through the next academic year and intends to expand the program to cover all OTC campuses and centers. This resource has proven that meeting barriers, like hunger, through a stigma-free approach is successful.

OER grew as faculty embraced new digital materials opportunities
This goal group has focused on reducing the cost of course materials for students throughout the implementation of the strategic plan. Over the last two years, the group has emphasized Open Educational Resources (OER). OTC has continued to embrace these emerging resources in recent years. This academic year, 27 courses utilized OER. This is significant growth from the few courses that used it in previous years. This growth was made possible by the exhaustive work of faculty and the OTC Hamra Library to develop OER resources for our courses. OER, coupled with the savings students have already seen from AutoAccess textbooks, has led to a 38% decrease in the cost of course materials for students over last year.

DELIVERABLES
- Identify opportunities to integrate personal and financial support resources into existing student services, and seek external funding for the addition of wrap-around student services.
- Work with local school districts to increase the number of residents who have access to in-district tuition, reducing the cost of accessing education.
- Reduce the cost of textbooks and supplies for students, while maintaining quality and accessibility.
- Continue efforts to increase the enrollment of underserved student groups and provide support to promote successful outcomes once enrolled.
- Increase the provision and awareness of support services that aid in addressing specific barriers to education faced by students.
- Evaluate student technology and internet access needs to identify opportunities for improved access.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

Increase and sustain the college's physical and online capacity to ensure every citizen in OTC's service area has an opportunity to access college services.

Goal One: Add technical training facilities and programs to meet community needs for retaining and attracting manufacturing firms.

Construction of the Plaster Manufacturing Center got underway on the Springfield campus

OTC broke ground on the new Robert W. Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing (PMC) in fall 2020. Through winter and spring, fast progress was made on construction. The majority of the building framework was completed by the end of spring semester. The campus community can watch construction progress not only from the ground but also through a live feed on our website. Construction is anticipated to be competed on schedule in early summer 2022, in time for classes to begin in fall 2022.

The PMC led to an integrated approach to technical education

While workers started construction of the physical PMC building, OTC staff and faculty spent the 2020-2021 academic year developing new programming for the center. Interdepartmental workgroups spent the year researching and developing improvements in areas spanning program curriculum, community engagement, and industry-recognized credential integration. This work will ensure that not only will OTC have state-of-the-art facilities, but also instruction to meet the needs of Southwest Missouri's manufacturing industry. This work is set to continue through the next year, led by PMC, Technical Education and Center for Academic Innovation staff.

DELIVERABLES

- Construct of a Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Technology to allow for the addition of new programs in the field of advanced manufacturing, and training space to meet the needs of area employers.
- Centralize technical education programs in Springfield into a single building, allowing for an integrated approach to training.
- Relocate the agriculture program to the Richwood Valley campus to allow for improved facilities and alignment with emerging regional needs.
- Expand technical education programs at the Table Rock campus to meet the training needs of area employers and school districts.
- Annually survey area manufacturers to evaluate their needs and satisfaction with OTC's training opportunities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

Increase and sustain the college's physical and online capacity to ensure every citizen in OTC's service area has an opportunity to access college services.

Goal Two: Evaluate physical facility capacity and usage system-wide to ensure that OTC's service area needs are being met.

OTC Springfield's Student Plaza redevelopment got underway

Meeting the physical needs of students comes in many forms. For the aging Student Plaza on the Springfield campus, a redevelopment was needed. The plaza is one of students' and employees' favorite areas of campus. However, wear and tear, as well as accessibility issues, meant it was time to redesign the space. The new plaza was designed with student needs in mind. It will feature ramped inclines, additional seating, greenspace, improved Wi-Fi , and features designed to create gathering spaces for students. The new plaza is also designed to be extended upon the completion of the PMC, creating a student pedestrian pathway through the center of campus.
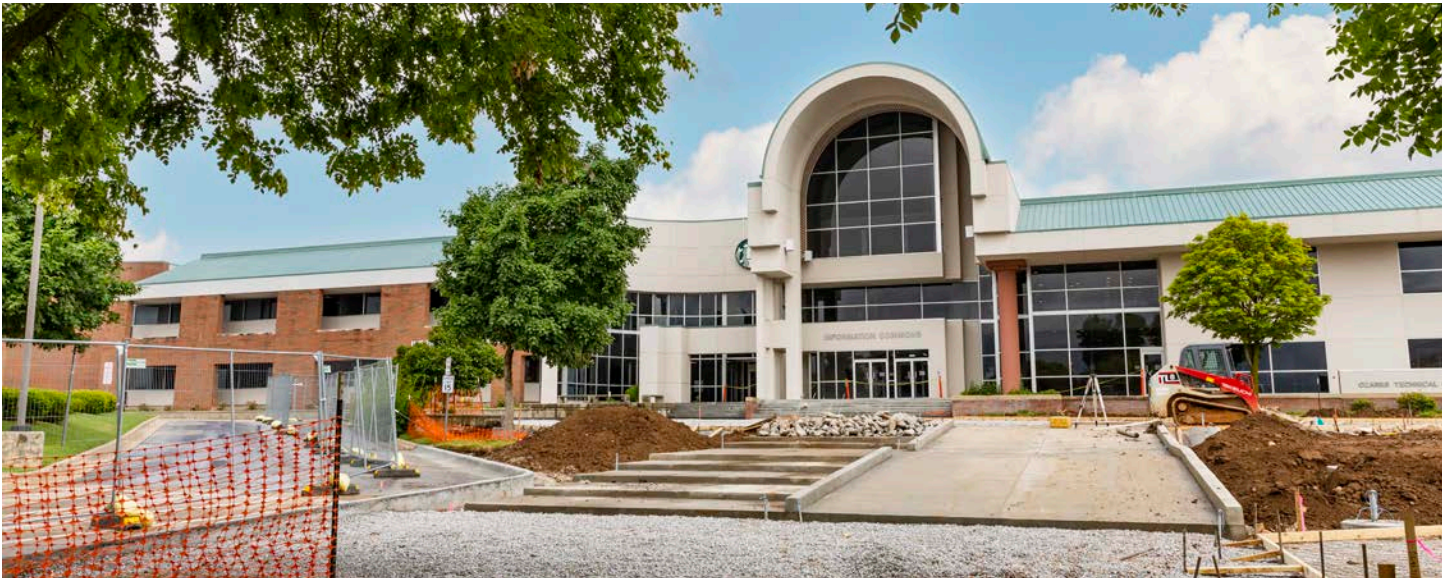
DELIVERABLES

- Complete new facility master plan for the OTC system.
- Construct an educational center using donated land in Republic to improve educational access for the western portion of the OTC service area.
- Annually review trends in service area population, high school and OTC enrollment to ensure that the college has the physical capacity to meet demand.
- Evaluate classroom utilization across the OTC system to maximize the number of students served with existing classrooms, and identify opportunities for classroom redesign to improve student learning.
- Continue the relocation of parking at the Springfield campus outside of the campus core to improve pedestrian access and safety; analyze parking demand as part of master planning process and evaluate external funding opportunities to improve parking and access to alternative transportation.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

Increase and sustain the college's physical and online capacity to ensure every citizen in OTC's service area has an opportunity to access college services.

Goal Three: Modernize and maintain the college's information technology infrastructure to support college operations.

Major technology upgrades completed across campus
Through federal funding, OTC made strides in upgrading technology across all locations. Network upgrades were made with new core and distribution switches, as well as a new lithium-ion battery backup system installed on the Springfield campus. Hardware upgrades throughout the system led to replacement of over 1,400 computers and laptops. Additionally, over 200 classrooms across the OTC system received webcams and speakers to make them hybrid-capable. Funds also enabled software upgrades, such as the expansion of services like Zoom, and the purchase of a new degree audit software.

OTC purchased software for student success
OTC purchased TargetX, a customer relationship management software. TargetX is integrated into the new Student Success Redesign, ensuring student supports are proactive, data-informed and holistic. This type of software is used by organizations to manage communications and streamline processes for end users. OTC is utilizing the software to connect offices and services across campuses. Students will be able to schedule services online, receive customized communications and have a real-time record of their activities around the college. This will allow college staff to improve the student experience and ensure students have access to the right services for their needs. The software is in early implementation and will begin pilot-testing in fall 2021.
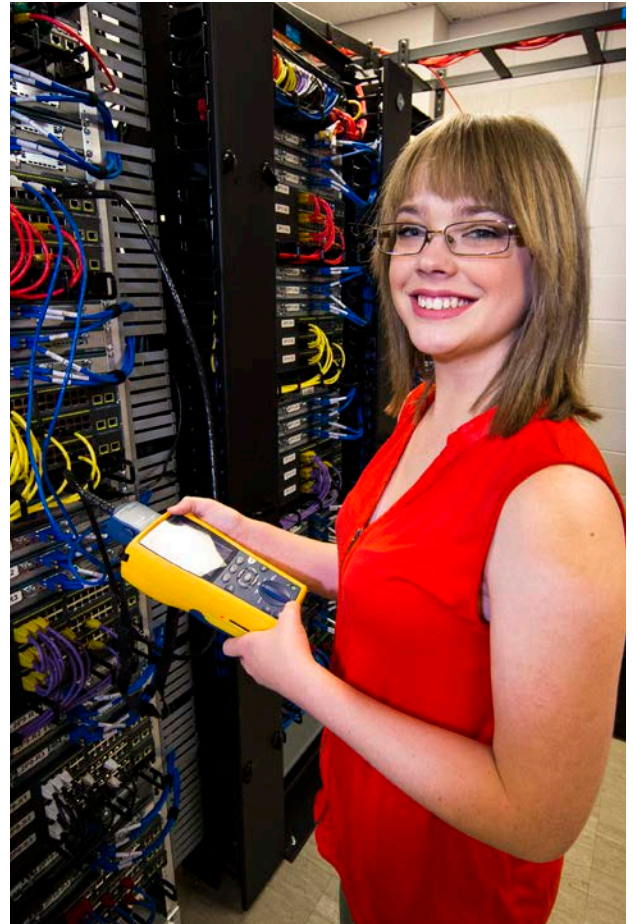
DELIVERABLES
- Evaluate existing software and hardware to identify opportunities for cost-savings and improved services.
- Annually assess information technology lifecycle and needs.
- Reduce deferred maintenance costs through modernization efforts and maintenance of equipment within operational life-cycle.
- Develop a capital budgeting process to link life-cycle assessment and budgeting processes.
- Perform annual survey assessment of employee information technology needs and satisfaction.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

Increase and sustain the college's physical and online capacity to ensure every citizen in OTC's service area has an opportunity to access college services.

Goal Four: Improve the ability of OTC Online to meet increasing online student demand.

COVID-19 led to leaps forward in faculty online development
COVID-19 allowed the college to make considerable progress toward the goals of increasing online teaching resources available to faculty. The Center for Academic Innovation (CAI) developed a suite of trainings and supports for teachers, and they pivoted from seated to online instruction. Faculty were not only capable of making the switch, but showed that online instruction could provide a comparable student experience to seated courses. The CAI continued supporting faculty throughout the year, even after seated instruction returned, with opportunities to take continued professional development courses. There were 559 participants in the two online course opportunities. Online student enrollment has continued to be above the expected level throughout the year and is anticipated to continue stronger than expected growth in future years.

Instructional Media Studio opened for online faculty
Physics Instructor Jared Durden proposed the construction of a lab for online faculty to film high quality content for their courses at the 2020 Innovation Celebration. Although it wasn't selected for a grant, the idea became a reality after being adopted by the CAI and funded through the CARES Act. The new Instructional Media Studio features a light board, video camera and an integrated computer system. This resource has already been useful to faculty with 72 hours recorded in the 2020-2021 academic year. The room is open to faculty anytime during office hours.

DELIVERABLES

- Increase support services and technology resources for students taking online courses at each OTC location to promote educational access and success.
- Assess the different support needs of online students to ensure that OTC provides it at times and formats that work for these students; develop a support structure based on online best practices, such as intrusive advising and mentorship models.
- Evaluate online instructional design and delivery to identify and share practices that support student success in online courses.
- Improve information on online course experiences and expectations for students during the onboarding process to help in their course selection decisions.
- Identify opportunities to expand Health Sciences capacity using a hybrid approach to course delivery.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

Actively engage the community and external groups to best meet the educational and workforce needs of OTC's service area.

Goal One: Maintain alignment between the college's operations and area workforce needs to provide graduates with rewarding employment outcomes that strengthen our community.

Workplace employability skills focus adopted

To meet the needs of both students and area employers, OTC is taking a look at the workplace skills students learn through their education. This goal group researched employability skills using resources like the National Association of Colleges and Employers, Missouri Department of Education, and similar institutions. Using this research, a new set of employability skills were drafted. Throughout the year, academic programs, academic leadership and area employers provided feedback on the new skills. In June 2021, the new list was adopted. This group will now begin investigating the best methods for incorporating these skills more deeply into academic programs to ensure students who graduate from OTC are well-prepared for the workforce.

Higher Order Thinking*
Communicating*
Valuing*
Teamwork†
Applied Knowledge
Effective Relationships
Community Engagement
Employability Skills
Professionalism†
Leadership†
Workplace Skills
Technology†
Career & Self Development†
Managing Information*

*CORE Experiences
†NACE Career Readiness Competencies

DELIVERABLES

- Conduct an annual skills gap analysis that evaluates area employment needs, future trends and current graduate production.
- Identify opportunities to expand high-demand programs based on area needs.
- Continue to actively engage advisory groups for all career and technical programs to ensure alignment of training with industry needs.

- Survey area employers annually to assess community needs and satisfaction with OTC graduates hired (where applicable).
- Ensure that employability skills are integrated into every student's education, and evaluate methods of documenting employability skill outcomes.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

Actively engage the community and external groups to best meet the educational and workforce needs of OTC's service area.

Goal Two: Develop partnerships with area employers, school districts, universities and organizations to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for the OTC service area.

Dual Credit grows

Dual credit has continued to experience growth at OTC. Increasingly, high school students are taking advantage of these opportunities to get a jump start on college. The High School Programs office has increased resources to the community, like the counselor's toolbox — which provides resources about dual credit to high school counselors — and a dedicated page for homeschooling parents that explains the differences between all of the high school student opportunities at OTC. The increase in dual credit means that more students will leave secondary education with a head start in college. This head start can decrease debt, increase likelihood of completion, and strengthen the high school-to-college pipeline.

OTC's first Bachelor's degree and four new transfer degrees approved

In order to meet new requirements for board certification, Respiratory Therapists will be able to start working towards OTC's first bachelor's degree starting in fall 2022. To increase students' ease of transferring to our partner institutions, Academic Affairs also updated four new transfer degrees to improve students' pathways to transfer institutions. The Curriculum Committee approved an Associate of Arts in Bioclinical Sciences, Agriculture - Animal Science, Agriculture - Plant Science and Agriculture - General. These new degrees provide opportunities for students to pursue their educational goals, and — for many bioclinical sciences and agriculture students — that includes plans to attend a four-year institution.

DELIVERABLES

- Identify opportunities to create or expand school district partnerships to increase the number of area high school students who have access to OTC training or educational opportunities.
- Work with area employers who offer tuition reimbursement programs to provide their employees with access to education that is relevant to their jobs.
- Provide training programs to meet the occupational continuing education requirements of area employers.
- Increase productive apprenticeship and internship opportunities for OTC students, aligned with workforce needs.
- Conduct outreach with area homeschool families and organizations to provide their students with an effective path to educational opportunities at OTC.
- Collaborate with area universities to develop effective transfer pathways for OTC students and follow up to evaluate student performance after transferring.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

Actively engage the community and external groups to best meet the educational and workforce needs of OTC's service area.

Goal Three: Continue a high level of engagement with the community so that OTC can keep informed on community needs and provide awareness of OTC services.

Explore OTC traveled to area high schools
With COVID-19 restricting the possibility of large events, OTC adapted by taking Explore OTC to high school students directly. Adapting the annual day-long exploration of OTC's technical education programs into a traveling and virtual event proved to be a success. Fifty-one Technical Education instructors and leaders visited 10 area high schools resulting in 519 students exposed to the possibilities of an OTC technical education degree through hands-on demonstrations and engagement activities.

DELIVERABLES

- Maintain an annual presence at well-attended community events to provide area residents with convenient opportunities to share feedback.
- Identify opportunities to allow residents and community groups to tour OTC locations and receive information on the services and opportunities provided by the college.

- Develop a volunteer program to provide qualified area residents with the opportunity to support students through efforts like tutoring.
- Pursue outreach efforts, including on-campus events, for area middle and high school students to inform them of available career educational opportunities and resources such as the A+ scholarship program.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

Actively engage the community and external groups to best meet the educational and workforce needs of OTC's service area.

Goal Four: Improve the college's fiscal sustainability and capacity to meet community needs through increased external funding.

COVID-19 funding brought unprecedented external financial support to OTC

COVID-19 ushered in a wave of federal funding opportunities that brought OTC more federal funding than at any point in the history of the college. The largest blocks of funding came from the Department of Education's Higher Education Emergency Relief funds. These three grants offered funds to directly assist students and to adapt the institution to meet the new requirements the pandemic brought. Additionally, the increase in federal assistance and the most successful fundraising year in OTC Foundation history meant that the Foundation was able to increase scholarships to students over previous years. Additionally, grants were awarded to both the Early Childhood Education Center and the OTC Hamra Library to develop new programs that meet unique needs of our students.

DELIVERABLES

- Maintain an annual presence at well-attended community events to provide area residents with convenient opportunities to share feedback.
- Identify opportunities to allow residents and community groups to tour OTC locations and receive information on the services and opportunities provided by the college.
- Develop a volunteer program to provide qualified area residents with the opportunity to support students through efforts like tutoring.
- Pursue outreach efforts, including on-campus events, for area middle and high school students to inform them of available career educational opportunities and resources such as the A+ scholarship program.

INNOVATION CELEBRATION

April 2021 marked the second annual Innovation Celebration, highlighting work done throughout the institution in support of the college's strategic plan. The Game Changer Grant competition is a cornerstone of the event. These grants provide $10,000 to teams with innovative approaches to reaching the college's strategic priorities. The 2020-2021 academic year launched the first of these Game Changing projects. At the 2021 Innovation Celebration, they each provided an update.

OTC Beef – Agriculture Department *(Strategic Initiative #1)*
With Game Changer Grant funds, the OTC Agriculture program purchased livestock and equipment to expand livestock instruction. Starting with cattle, the program quickly expanded to include lambs, goats and even a herding sheepdog for the growing flock. The program provides agriculture students the opportunity to work with livestock from birth through production, giving them hands-on experience they can use when they leave the classroom for the farm. This has offered new opportunities in their Richwood Valley location that had previously not been possible on the Springfield campus.

Campus Maps – Administrative Services *(Strategic Initiative #2)*
Administrative Services used their Game Changer funds to purchase a new 3D campus mapping system. The new maps show campus buildings to scale and include information about notable services located in each building. The benefits for the college are two-fold: New students will be able to explore campus virtually like never before, and current students can find their way to classes and resources on campus with clear directions. The new maps provide an upgraded experience for users and are a welcome replacement to the previous outdated maps. These maps will continue to grow and update as the campuses evolve.

Project RISE – Student Recruitment (*Strategic Initiative #3*)
Project RISE serves formerly incarcerated individuals by providing a support group on campus and access to information tailored to their specific needs. Despite having to change plans due to COVID-19, there were 12 participants in the inaugural year of the program. Students met virtually and explored topics like preparing for success in college, talking about criminal history in a job search, and preparing for exams. Through this support, the project showed great success in improving the outcomes of this student group: 91.7% completed their courses successfully with an average GPA of 3.23, and 71.4% registered for a future semester at OTC. The program is poised to continue to grow and develop with 39 new individuals being invited to participate.

2021 Game Changer Winning Projects
The inaugural Game Changer grants had real impact and the decision was made to continue to award funds for projects that present inventive solutions to issues facing the college. Below are the 2021 awardees. Their projects will be implemented in the next year and will continue the tradition of innovative, student-first ideas that continue to support college goals.

- **Outdoor Classroom** (Biology, Bioclinical Sciences, and Construction Trades) – To enhance student learning and provide a new location for instruction, the construction of an outdoor classroom on the Springfield campus was proposed by several faculty members in departments in both General Education and Technical Education.
- **Eagle Pride Student Showcase** (Technical Education Division) – Some of the best evidence of the strength of our programs is the work produced by students in the classroom. To help people visualize technical programs, a new Eagle Pride Student Showcase will be constructed in the Information Commons atrium on the Springfield campus so current students, prospective students and visitors can see the school projects being created throughout campus.
- **Ozzy's Digital Commons** (Information Technology) – To provide future-focused resources to the college, students will soon be able to explore cutting-edge technology, such as virtual reality. Students and instructors will be able to reserve time in this space to test the boundaries of new technology.
- **3D Printer and IT Visibility** (Information Technology) – Through the purchase of two 3D printers, the IT department will save the college money and provide greater visibility to the future of networking. IT will use the printers to produce necessary components for networking around OTC's campuses and centers. By also placing one of these printers in a visible area of campus, they will also show OTC students the power that these printers have to solve everyday problems.