



# 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

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# 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 prepares to serve all OTC students**

The 2021-2022 academic year proved to be a critical period of growth and change in the Student Affairs Division. With the adoption of the Student Success Redesign in 2021, OTC used a phased implementation to scale the program, from serving fewer than 3,000 students to planning to serve all 10,000+ students by fall 2022. The college has created a total of five student success centers and will hire and train over 20 additional navigators. Each navigator will be trained over the summer of 2022 and will be ready to proactively support students when they start their fall semester. This will provide new resources to students at a level previously unprecedented within the college. Students will have access to a dedicated navigator who will help them create academic, financial and long-term plans. Additionally, the student success centers will have access to a team of Community Resource Specialists to help connect students to resources for any needs that can't be served directly at OTC. This project has shown success throughout its pilot phase and is already serving as a model of best practices for peer institutions.



### **DELIVERABLES**

- Implement an embedded advising model to increase student access to specialized advising support.
- Use external best practices and employee ideas to pilot advising programs with the creation of an Advising Task Force to review pilot results for scalability.
- Utilize the OTC-101 course to provide students with early advising guidance including information on financial literacy, information literacy and college expectations.
- Develop sequenced course pathways for every OTC degree and top transfer pathways within the Associate of Arts degree.
- Improved integration of career guidance into the onboarding process prior to the student's selection of a degree or pathway.
- Provision of 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.



### The Office of Student Engagement launches at OTC

For the 2021-2022 academic year, OTC began a dedicated effort to support student life on campus through a new office in student affairs, the Office of Student Engagement. Vicki MacDonald was hired as the office's first director. In her role, she provides support to student organizations, organizes student events and coordinates the fall and spring picnics. The effort to support increased student life activities was prompted by feedback from students. In data collected through a survey, students asked for additional opportunities to interact with their peers outside of the classroom. Student feedback is a critical part of the new office's success. This will continue with a new student life survey planned to begin in fall 2022.

### 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 an oversight structure for student communications to coordinate efforts and ensure that student communications 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 co-location of relevant services, to improve student experiences.
- Implement an online system for all OTC students and employees to share feedback and ideas; 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.**

### **Gathering the voice of the students**

Over the 2021-2022 academic year, a research team gathered student feedback about experiences in the classroom. The group was part of the Student Learning Experience Task Force, which examines ways to improve teaching and learning at OTC. Throughout the year, data was collected through interviews and focus groups. Students described their overall experiences, memorable assignments and barriers to learning while at OTC.

#### **Notable findings:**

- When asked what first comes to mind when they think about OTC, nearly a third of students talked about how great their instructors are. They identified instructors who not only taught the material but made a lasting impact on that student's overall experience.
- Half of students identified areas for self-improvement, like time management, as a cause of being unsuccessful. But of these students, 14% reported more deeply rooted negative self-perceptions, indicating that being unsuccessful can take a toll on how students view themselves.



When I came here, I was worried that it would be a lot harder to follow along in my classes and get work done. And I was very surprised with how easy it was to click with teachers and, like, find resources.

### **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.

### A game changer for parenting students

At the 2022 Innovation Celebration, a Game Changer Grant was awarded to a group aiming to improve the experience of nursing mothers on campus. The grant will be used to improve lactation rooms at every OTC location. Furniture, like comfortable chairs, will make the facilities easier for students to use. Increasing visibility and access to facilities was also an aim of the project. With new wayfinding materials on the website, students will be able to easily identify the closest available room. These improvements will make OTC a more welcoming place to the over 150 students we serve who are a parent to children under one year of age.



### 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.
- Take steps to 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 services 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.

### Technical Education at OTC prepares to soar with the upcoming Airframe & Powerplant Training Center

In 2022, OTC announced an upcoming expansion to the successful partnership with the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. The college will expand the current aviation program to include programs in airframe and powerplant maintenance. These programs, set to open in fall 2024, will be housed in a new facility on-site at the airport. Students will learn how to repair and maintain the aircraft and the equipment required to operate them. This program will fill a need in the aviation industry as both public and private flights continue to increase.



## DELIVERABLES

- Construction 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.
- Centralization of technical education programs in Springfield into a single building allowing for an integrated approach to training.
- Relocation of the agriculture program to the Richwood Valley campus to allow for improved facilities and alignment with emerging regional needs.
- Expansion of technical education programs at the Table Rock campus to meet the training needs of area employers and school districts.
- Annual survey of 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.**

### **Springfield Campus exterior beautification continues with new plan for campus entryway**

OTC's renovated Student Plaza has been a hit with students during the past year. The addition of new seating, accessible features and high-tech upgrades has made it a popular place to find students between classes. These improvements are serving as a starting point for a campus-wide beautification project that will extend the plaza to the new Robert W. Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing, redesign traffic flow and create a new entryway to welcome visitors at the main entrance on the North side of campus. The plans are anticipated to take several years and will be completed in conjunction with other campus improvements, such as expanded parking.



### **DELIVERABLES**

- Completion of a new facility master plan for the OTC system.
- Construction of an educational center using donated land in Republic to improve educational access for the western portion of the OTC service area.
- Annual review of service area population trends, high school and OTC enrollment to ensure that the college has the physical capacity to meet community needs.
- 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.**

### Increased IT infrastructure sets up OTC for future technology

Last year, OTC added technology to provide a new experience for students, such as hybrid classrooms and a new software to manage interactions. This year, OTC's IT division added infrastructure to support faculty and staff. The creation of a new IT Helpdesk website will help answer questions for faculty and staff with streamlined FAQs and a new request form. Behind the scenes, miles of new fiber have been laid to support a higher bandwidth with more reliability. These and many other infrastructure improvements will ensure that the technology investments of the past few years have robust support as they are put to use.



### DELIVERABLES

- Evaluation of existing software and hardware to identify opportunities for cost savings and improved services.
- Annual assessment of information technology life cycle and needs.
- Reduction of deferred maintenance costs through modernization efforts and maintenance of equipment within operational life cycle.
- Development of a capital budgeting process to link life-cycle assessment and budgeting processes.
- 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.**

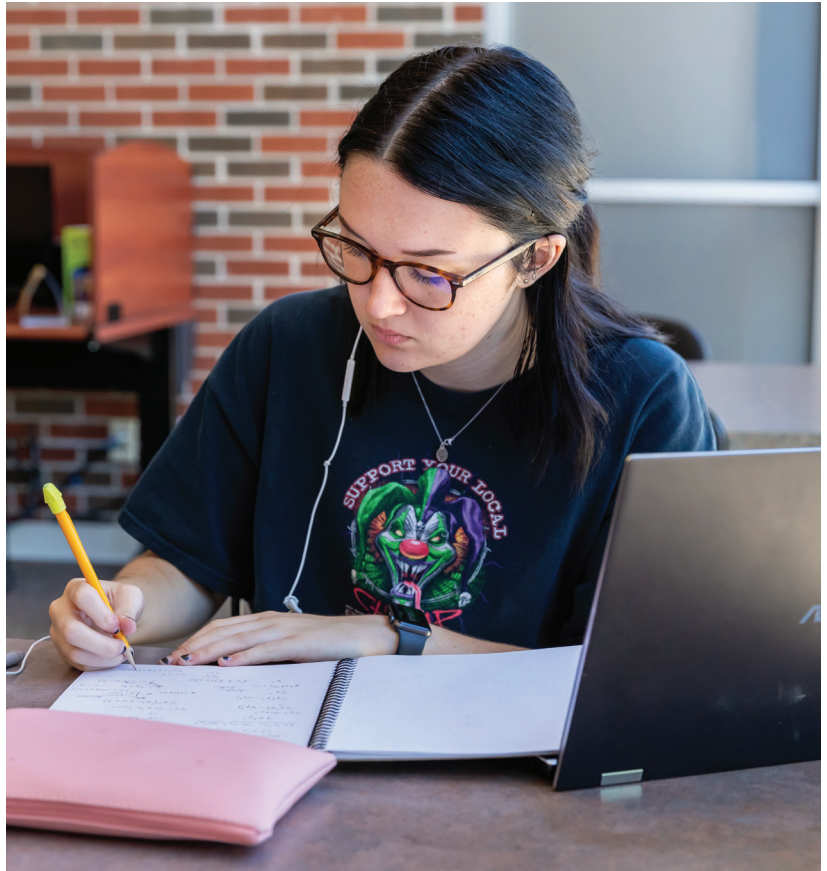
## **Goal Four:**

**Improve the ability of OTC Online to meet increasing online student demand.**

### **Understanding online student success through data**

For years there has been a gap in student success between seated and online courses. As the number of online students continues to increase, and more classes are incorporating virtual elements, this trend was examined by a group of faculty and staff to better understand where students were falling through the cracks. From their research, they confirmed that 5-10% fewer students successfully complete an online course when compared to their seated peers. They also found that:

- The majority of the gap was in students withdrawing from online courses at a higher rate than seated courses;
- Online courses contain more high-barrier students, presenting an opportunity to utilize OTC Cares as a way to better support student success;
- Preparation of online students ahead of their courses is essential for them to succeed.



### **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 experience and expectations for students during the on-boarding process to help in their course selection decisions and in preparing for success.
- Identify opportunities to expand allied health 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.**

### **Translating employability skills from the classroom to the workplace**

OTC has never contained learning to just book studies. Students in all programs learn skills that are essential in the workplace. After adopting a new set of employability skills in the summer of 2021, a small working group has been examining how these skills are translated into the classroom. Coordinating with faculty in all divisions of the college, the working group identified assignments and projects that could be used to measure employability skills. These assignments are also being developed into a toolbox for future instructors to use as they develop course materials designed to prepare students for life outside the classroom. Looking to the future, the working group is continuing to investigate tools that will help students measure and communicate the employability skills they have gained alongside their degrees while at OTC.



### **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.**



### **OTC partners with Amazon to join the Career Choice Network**

OTC was selected as a partner institution in Amazon's Career Choice Network. Amazon approached OTC after opening the Republic Fulfillment Center, wanting to provide local educational options. Amazon employees now are able to attend OTC and receive up to \$5,250 to support their education. Employees can choose from any of OTC's credit-based programs to further their long-term career goals. OTC and Amazon continue to partner closely to make this opportunity as seamless as possible for employees; this included hosting a team of OTC staff at the Republic Fulfillment Center this spring to answer questions and help Amazon team members complete their enrollment.

### **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 low-cost, high-quality 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 stay informed on community needs and provide awareness of OTC services.**

### **Events were back in action at OTC campuses and centers**

After two years of delayed or canceled events, OTC was able to host events for students and community members on campus again in the spring of 2022. Programs shared the hard work of their students through events like the Art Walk Student Showcase and the Agriculture Family Fun Nights. Community members also were able to visit the campuses for tours. One of OTC's best opportunities to share information about the institution and our programs is through visits like these. By showing the work of our students, engaging the community in fun events or giving a tour, we are able to share more about the role OTC plays in making Southwest Missouri a growing community.



### **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 engage with the college and 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.



### OTC receives significant financial support for Robert W. Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing

As OTC is building the Robert W. Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing, private support has been critical in the completion of the project. Approaching \$8 million in funds raised so far, nearly a quarter of the facility's \$40 million price tag, the OTC Foundation has developed creative ways for people at all giving levels to be involved. From a customized sock campaign for faculty and staff to multi-million-dollar naming opportunities, donors could show their support in unique ways. To make these opportunities happen, the foundation has worked since 2018 to raise funds. Starting with quiet fundraising efforts early on, they have since shifted to boots-on-the-ground approaches like construction tours throughout the past year. They will continue to raise funds after the Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing opens in fall 2022 in order to name remaining spaces and develop ongoing support for manufacturing programs, such as scholarship opportunities.

## DELIVERABLES

- Increase private support of the college through the OTC Foundation endowment and donor base.
- Secure external grants and contract funding to support the college's mission and strategic plan.
- Create and maintain a project priority list for every division to use in identification of external funding opportunities.
- Maximize net revenue from ancillary and auxiliary funding sources to support college operations.
- Engage with the community, legislature and state government to maintain awareness of OTC's fiscal needs and outcomes provided.

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