Laredo Community College

Strategic Plan
2005-2008

Approved by LCC Board of Trustees
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Office of Institutional Effectiveness - Research & Planning
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INTRODUCTION

LCC’S GROWTH

Established in 1947, Laredo Community College has grown from a small campus with a few hundred students into one of the premier educational facilities in South Texas. This growth is reflected in the educational opportunities provided to the LCC service area. The College currently offers over 80 different degrees and certificates in 30 instructional programs.

The growth is further exemplified by the College’s opening of a second campus in south Laredo, LCC South, during the Fall 2004 semester. Additionally, the College has expanded its instructional offerings through the use of technology in a rapidly growing Distance Education component. Complementing this direct instruction are student support programs that range from counseling and financial aid to special populations and placement services. The College also serves as the site for several community-based organizations: Tech-Prep program, Communities in Schools, Literacy Volunteers of America, Project AVANCE, and the Rio Grande International Study Center.

Student enrollment in the Fall semester has grown from 6,919 students in 1995 to 9,032 in 2004, an increase of 30.5%. These enrollment gains have, in turn, increased the demand for program offerings and corresponding student support services. The heightened demand also encompasses enhanced instructional strategies and the implementation of advanced technology.

The growth that LCC has been experiencing makes it one of the fastest growing community colleges in Texas. Based on historical enrollment patterns and state/local population trends, the College is expected to continue experiencing an annual growth rate of approximately 2.5%. While the projected growth rate might seem conservative, it compounds the needs and requirements brought about by previous growth.

Limited resources have restricted the College’s efforts to address all the needs and requirements brought about by past growth. Because of these limitations, a number of items have not been addressed properly. In order to resolve this double-edged dilemma, catching-up
with previous growth and addressing future growth, the College must develop a comprehensive plan for its future initiatives.

**LCC Strategic Planning Process**

This document incorporates the results of Laredo Community College’s planning process and activities. It is through this Strategic Plan that LCC identifies its long- and short-term goals and objectives. The plan provides this information at the institutional and organizational unit levels. The contents of the LCC Strategic Plan are the outcome of the consensual efforts of the numerous committees, departments, offices, and individuals throughout the institution.

This plan will be the foundation upon which Laredo Community College’s institutional effectiveness will be assessed. The assessment of this plan’s objectives will not only provide data to evaluate the college’s performance, it will also produce information for evaluating the plan itself and modifying it accordingly for the next annual cycle. This will ensure that LCC follows a continuous improvement cycle by using the evaluation results for improvement.

LCC’s Strategic Plan consists of several components that provide a comprehensive view of the institution’s goals and objectives. These components range in scope from the institutional to the unit levels. The LCC Strategic Plan includes the following:

1. **Statement of Philosophy and Mission** – states LCC’s purpose and reason for existence;
2. **Vision Statement** – identifies what the college provides to the community;
3. **Institutional Goals** – they identify the major functions and services the college provides its students;
4. **Strategic Focus** – identifies the functions/services targeted by the institution to be addressed over the next several years;
5. **Institutional Objectives** – they identify the institution’s objectives for the upcoming academic year;
6. **Unit Objectives** – these are each organizational unit’s annual objectives.

The first three components (Statement of Philosophy and Mission, Vision Statement, and Institutional Goals) are long-term and comprehensive in nature. They are relatively consistent over time and provide information on who we are, what we provide, and how we do it.

On the other hand, the Strategic Focus, Institutional Objectives, and Unit Objectives are focused and targeted for the near-future. The Strategic Focus provides the direction, as related to
the Institutional Goals, the college will take over the next three to five years. The Institutional Objectives identify what the college wants to accomplish in the upcoming year. In turn, the Unit Objectives lists the activities the units will undertake to address the Institutional Objectives.

The first group, being long-term and comprehensive, provides the base on which to develop the short-term, focused group of components. The latter, in turn, provide the support needed to address and evaluate the former. A graphic representation is as follows:

**Interrelationship of Strategic Plan Components**

The diagram above attempts to illustrate how the plan’s components are linked. These relationships allow for the essence of the mission and vision statements to be transmitted to the institution’s and units’ objectives. The cumulative assessment of the unit objectives will in turn allow for the evaluation of the college’s objectives, goals, and mission.

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS**

The Institutional Effectiveness Process is the college’s annual planning and evaluation cycle designed to provide the information required to verify that the institution’s mission and vision
are being addressed. The IE Process incorporates all components of the Strategic Plan. The process addresses the long- and short-term components of the plan.

The IE Process provides the mechanism with which the institution assesses the outcomes of its planning and evaluates the accomplishment of goals and objectives. Through periodic status reports incorporated into the process, the institution can gauge its progress and make adjustments as required. The annual evaluation also produces the information required for developing the subsequent year’s objectives. The incorporation of the evaluation’s results into the planning process promotes the continuous improvement desired throughout the institution. The following diagram illustrates the annual sequence of LCC’s Institutional Effectiveness Process.

**Institutional Effectiveness Process**

**Annual Sequence**

- **Evaluation & Improvements**
  - Prepare College’s Annual Institutional Effectiveness Report.
  - Annual evaluation of Unit Objectives and Institutional Objectives.
  - Compile Units’ status of objectives and prepare periodic I.E. Status Reports.
  - Periodically assess status of Unit Objectives and report progress.

- **Strategic Planning**
  - Conduct Strategic Planning Workshop (Review Institutional Mission & Goals, Annual IE Report and revise/develop Institutional Objectives for new planning period.)
  - Prepare College’s Strategic Plan (Contains Institutional Mission, Goals, and Objectives for new planning period.)

- **Budgeting**
  - Review Status Reports and develop Units’/College’s Annual Budget.
  - LCC Board of Trustees reviews & approves the College’s Strategic Plan and Budget.

- **I.E. Plan**
  - Develop Institutional Effectiveness Plan for new planning period (Correlate Unit Objectives with Institutional Objectives.)

  A detailed presentation of the components and cycles of the IE Process may be obtained at the following web site [www.laredo.edu/research](http://www.laredo.edu/research).
Laredo Community College conducted its Strategic Planning Workshop on Thursday and Friday, November 4th and 5th, 2004. Approximately 75 College personnel participated in the two-day workshop. The participants included faculty, classified staff, administrators, Board trustees, and Citizen’s Advisory Committee members. Two external consultants were contracted as facilitators for the workshop, Dr. Millicent Valek, President of Brazosport College and Dr. Luther Bud Joyner, former President of Amarillo College.

Using the College’s current Strategic Plan as a base, the workshop was structured to address three main activities. The workshop’s primary activities were to:

- Review and revise the College’s Statement of Philosophy and Mission, Vision Statement and Institutional Goals, and
- Establish the Strategic Focus and Institutional Objectives for the next three-year planning period.

The agenda for the workshop called for the review of the Statement of Philosophy and Mission, Vision Statement, and the Institutional Goals during the Thursday morning session. The Strategic Focus and Institutional Objectives were reviewed during Thursday’s afternoon session.

The review of Institutional Objectives on Thursday afternoon was conducted in two break-out groups. The first of the break-out groups reviewed Institutional Objectives dealing with Instruction and Student Support issues, while the other group addressed those dealing with Administrative and Financial issues. A general session on Friday morning reviewed the outcomes of the previous day’s afternoon sessions and combined them to identify the areas/issues/concerns to be addressed by the College’s new Strategic Plan.
STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The Statement of Philosophy and Mission is a statement of fundamental purpose that fully embraces the social and intellectual aspirations of Laredo Community College. The Strategic Planning Workshop participants agreed that the then current statement reflected a series of Core Values that properly identify the College’s mission. These were:

- **Change** – LCC is open to changes required to address community needs and innovations in the educational, technological, and industrial environments,
- **Commitment** – LCC is committed to its mission and the community,
- **Community** – The College’s programs and services target our community,
- **Openness** – LCC’s programs and services are available to everybody,
- **Opportunity** – The College provides the community with a number of opportunities for advancement, and
- **People** – The College’s programs and services are directed to individuals and their needs.

While the participants agreed that the previous mission statement should be maintained, they pointed out a term that may be changed. The phrase “…we respond to changes…” is included in the last sentence of the first paragraph. The point was made that the term “responds” presents a reactive connotation rather than a pro-active. The participants agreed that LCC should promote an image of being an innovator rather than just responding to changes. The new statement, as approved by the LCC Board of Trustees on April 21, 2005, now reads as follows:

**STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION**

Laredo Community College is a comprehensive community college committed to providing educational services that meet the needs of the community, its citizens, and its service area. As a border community college, we are prepared for changes – both national and international - in the technological, industrial, and educational environment.

Our philosophy is that education enhances the individual's opportunity for full participation in society. Therefore, we strive to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to educate themselves to the full extent of their abilities and needs. Consequently, we are committed to an open-door policy which ensures opportunities for all types of students.
LCC seeks to implement its educational philosophy by offering occupational programs, transfer curricula, adult and continuing education, developmental education, student development services, and community services.

VISION STATEMENT

While the Statement of Philosophy and Mission explains the College’s reason for existence, the Vision Statement describes the ideal status the institution desires to achieve. The workshop participants agreed that it should essentially remain the same, with a minor grammatical correction as follows:

VISION STATEMENT

Laredo Community College shall provide for quality education with a commitment to excellence, by which students achieve their educational objectives while meeting institutional standards in order to compete successfully in the 21st century.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

A goal, as defined by the U. S. Department of Education, is “a statement of broad direction or intent, which is general and timeless. It is not concerned with a particular achievement within a specified time period.” As statements of broad intent which address the College’s Statement of Philosophy and Mission, the following Institutional Goals address the major functions of the institution.

The Strategic Planning Workshop participants reviewed the College’s current Institutional Goals and determined that they should remain, but incorporate the premises regarding communications and shared information. This was incorporated into Institutional Goal VI.

The participants also proposed that goals be developed to address two specific functions within the College, technology and resource development. These two goals have been added. (XI and XII)

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

I. Mission - To state clearly and review periodically the mission and goals of the College.

II. Planning and Evaluation - To provide and document comprehensive research, planning, and information services that support continuous evaluation and revision of every facet of college operations.
III. **Educational Programs** - To provide an open door admission policy with a comprehensive curriculum made up of a broad range of certificate and degree programs based on the occupational and educational needs of the residents of the service area of the LCC District.

IV. **Educational Support Services** - To provide comprehensive student support services to facilitate student growth and to enhance student success in the academic, social, and economic community.

V. **Faculty and College Community** - To hire, through fair employment practices, a qualified faculty and staff to accomplish the mission of the institution.

VI. **Administrative Processes** - To practice effective decision-making, encourage broad participation in campus governance in an environment of mutual trust and respect, and provide timely internal and external communication of these processes.

VII. **Financial Resources** - To provide effective and efficient administrative management of fiscal resources while maintaining full fiscal accountability and keeping expenditures within available resources.

VIII. **Physical Resources** - To build and maintain facilities and grounds that functionally and aesthetically meet institutional needs and create a physical environment conducive to learning.

IX. **Student Development** - To provide the resources by which students can acquire basic knowledge and skills necessary to be self-learners and effective problem-solvers.

X. **Community and Culture** - To enrich the lives of students and community residents by offering cultural programs, short courses, workshops, literacy education and other educational events of interest to them.

XI. **Technology** – To further incorporate technology into instructional, student support, and operational processes and activities throughout the College.

XII. **Resource Development** – To coordinate the exploration of additional resources from federal, state, private, and corporate entities to promote the College’s mission.

**STRATEGIC FOCUS**

The college’s Strategic Focus identifies the operational areas in which the institution will concentrate its efforts for the next three years. This task was undertaken by the participants of the Strategic Planning workshop. The participants reviewed various performance reports, survey
results, internal data reports, and environmental indicators to determine which areas the college should target for the next three years. They identified the following areas:

- To continually improve student performance in all instructional programs,
- To develop new instructional programs and strategies that address the needs of the college’s service area,
- To review and revise the college’s operational policies and procedures to provide more efficient and effective services, and
- To explore alternate avenues for acquiring the required resources.

These are the four broad-spectrum areas that have been identified for Laredo Community College to address over the next three years. It is from this focus that the college’s Institutional Objectives for the 2005-2008 academic years were developed.

**INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES, 2005 - 2008**

The Institutional Objectives identify the explicit direction Laredo Community College will pursue over the next three-year period regarding each of the following topics. These identify the College’s priority areas that the institution’s departments, programs and offices will use as guideposts in developing their annual Unit Plans.

The Strategic Planning Workshop participants reviewed the College’s 2002-2005 Institutional Objectives in the previous Strategic Plan and assessed their attainment. Upon review of the data presented, the group determined that 10 of the 14 objectives had been attained. The remaining 4 objectives have been carried forward to this plan to continue addressing the issues. The group identified a number of issues that have been compiled into an additional 6 objectives. The ten ensuing objectives for the next three year period are as follows:

**INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES, 2005 -08**

1. To review and revise the processes for assessing and evaluating instructional programs,
2. To expand the research and development of new instructional programs,
3. To develop and implement strategies that address the college-preparedness of students,
4. To develop and implement a more efficient comprehensive advisement, counseling and orientation process for students,
5. To investigate the feasibility of expanding the College’s district,

6. To implement processes that incorporate technology in the instructional programs and support services,

7. To upgrade the College’s main information system to incorporate operational efficiencies,

8. To develop and implement personnel policies and procedures that ensure the hiring, retraining, and retention of qualified faculty and staff,

9. To develop and implement strategies to place LCC in a leadership position in the community’s economic development,

10. To develop and implement processes which enhance internal communication and teamwork.

**UNIT OBJECTIVES**

The LCC Strategic Plan will serve as the foundation for the development of annual Unit Plans by each department, program or office. Each of the units will develop annual plans that contain specific Unit Objectives that are aligned with the College’s Institutional Objectives. The correlation of the units’ activities with the institution’s purpose will facilitate evaluation and assessment at both levels.

**EVALUATION OF LCC STRATEGIC PLAN**

The above-mentioned correlation will link all Unit Objectives with each corresponding Institutional Objective(s). This linkage will facilitate the evaluation of the Strategic Plan. By assessing the measurable Outcomes of the related Unit Objectives, an evaluation of each Institutional Objective will be accomplished. The results of this annual evaluation will be presented to a broad-based campus group for review and revision of the Institutional Objectives. The assessed Institutional Objectives will provide the foundation for the development of Unit Plans for the subsequent years.