



**VIRGINIA  
PENINSULA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, and  
MATHEMATICS (STEM) DIVISION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2024**

**July 21, 2021**

# THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The 2020-2021 academic year was a challenging one, both for Thomas Nelson Community College and for its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Division. At the College level, the COVID-19 pandemic and its rampant spread across the world, nation, and Commonwealth of Virginia forced all public facilities, including colleges and universities, to officially close under Executive Order in March 2020. As a result, instructional delivery entirely shifted to online models. Faculty and staff at TNCC responded to this abrupt change with determination and open-mindedness, focusing on the learning needs of their students to ensure that there would be few to no barriers preventing them from successfully completing their coursework.

Although the pandemic shifted the face of instructional delivery and access at TNCC, a new President was named to the College through a very transparent and participatory process. Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon assumed the Presidency of the College in January 2021 and began the difficult and challenging task of leading the state's fifth largest community college in Virginia through a pandemic. Despite the challenges, Dr. Brannon and the TNCC learning community engaged in an inclusive strategic planning process that produced a new three-year strategic plan for the College that was formally adopted by its College Board of TNCC in June 2021.

The STEM Division at TNCC experienced similar challenges through the same academic year. In January 2020, departments were merged to formally create a STEM Division at TNCC; however, one month later in February 2020, the new division saw the departure of its Dean. This vacancy was the last in a long line of former Deans who had rotated through this position over past years. As the pandemic forced its new normal upon the College, a talented and dedicated STEM faculty and staff worked tirelessly to ensure that their division focused on moving forward to meet student needs, despite their leadership challenges.

As the College re-engaged in its strategic planning process in the spring of 2020, the STEM Division engaged simultaneously in a series of focus group conversations with the faculty and staff, including workforce development, administrative and support staff, and adjunct faculty, through November and December of 2020. Planning and focus group conversations focused on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of STEM Division. The data and themes that were provided as feedback in these sessions was reviewed and shared with the Division's leadership team.

As the STEM focus group sessions were concluded, a search process for a new Dean of STEM yielded positive results, as Dr. Charles DeSassure onboarded from Dallas, Texas into this position. As the work of the College's Strategic Plan Steering Committee continued through the spring of 2020, the STEM leadership team also convened to review the focus group data and

identify and define their core beliefs. The team also developed a STEM Division mission and vision statement.

As the College's 2024 Strategic Plan was completed and adopted in June 2021, the STEM Division Strategic Plan was drafted shortly thereafter, incorporating the same six goal areas as the TNCC Strategic Plan, but positioning its goals and strategies with elements that focused on STEM and the Division feedback offered in their focus groups. The STEM Division Strategic Plan will run concurrent with the same three-year timeframe as the College's Three-Year Strategic Plan and use similar metrics and performance indicators to measure progress and achievement.

# **VIRGINIA PENINSULA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **STEM DIVISION THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **MISSION**

STEM Division provides innovative and collaborative programs with rigorous, interdisciplinary learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics that foster a joy of learning, benefit the community, and prepare students for success in the workforce or a seamless transfer to universities.

### **VISION**

To inspire students to explore, evolve and excel in STEM and change their lives through collaboration, connection, and community partnerships.

### **CORE BELIEFS**

#### **Collaboration**

Our faculty are the hub of a multi-spoked wheel that connects our students to industry and its practitioners, four-year institutions, and subject matter. As members of a faculty family, we work and plan together, with the purpose of finding common connecting points between our disciplines and curriculum. We also seek to infuse our curriculum with behavioral and interpersonal skills to produce career-ready citizens and successful transfer students.

#### **Passion**

We love what we do and what we teach. This excitement ignites our classrooms every day. Our desire to ensure that our students are exposed to and immersed in the latest knowledge in our disciplines keeps us fresh in our fields and helps to break down barriers to learning. We encourage our students to develop a love for STEM and a sense of joy and wonder as they learn with us.

## **Resilience**

We embrace change by making the best of it, while keeping our focus on our students and their success. Our passion drives our ability to adapt and overcome, no matter the challenge.

## **Excellence**

Our faculty and staff will give their best every day, setting high standards both inside and outside of our classrooms. We recognize that perfection is the enemy of good and mistakes are not setbacks; they are learning experiences that improve our practice. The STEM Division will always do its best to help students grow their learning experiences into worthwhile achievements and success.

## **Innovation**

Experimentation, discovery, inquiry, and curiosity drive STEM. Applying current industry standards and expectations to our instruction, seeking new learning modalities to motivate and excite our students, and personalizing student learning improves our practice and ability to reach every student. Our desire for success allows us to push against the status quo and not accept a “normal” way of doing things.

## **Student-Centered**

Learning is a social activity. Our students deserve personalized and connected learning experiences in our classrooms. We focus on their learning needs through open communication and dialog, forging personal relationships with each of our students, and embracing accidental learning. Our faculty invests in student success and honors diversity in learning.

## **Strategic Goals**

The Three-Year STEM Division Strategic Plan must align with the College’s Three-Year Strategic Plan to ensure that it supports the larger, universal goals, objectives, strategies and metrics of the learning community. Using the 2024 TNCC Strategic Plan as its guide, the six goal areas for the STEM Strategic Plan will focus on the following areas:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Instructional Innovation
- Powerful Partnerships
- Modernized Marketing and Recruitment
- Employee Investment and Development
- Transparent and Authentic Communication

While the goals and their operational definitions are taken directly from the College's Three-Year Strategic Plan, the objectives, strategies, and success indicators will speak to specific feedback and highlighted priority areas identified in the STEM Division focus group conversations.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

*The STEM Division will create and sustain a culture in which every community member is valued, embraced, respected, appreciated, and treated fairly, and the diversity of our peoples, perspectives, and ideas is celebrated.*

### **CONTEXT**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational to the College's mission to be an inclusive force for postsecondary education and a college for the community. Woven solidly throughout the conversations within the STEM Division, our faculty and staff consistently and firmly identified the need to expand access to STEM courses and study to under-represented and under-resourced populations within our service community. Historically, women and minorities have been absent from the general STEM student body. As work across the globe continues to identify, encourage, and invite these individuals to engage in STEM study, the Division will develop and maintain a culture dedicated to increasing the diversity of our student body, making all feel welcomed, appreciated, respected and treated with dignity as we honor the diversity of people, perspectives, and ideas.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

To assess the impact of its work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the STEM Division intends to regularly report on and review the following indicators:

- The percentage of STEM faculty and staff who engage in training and professional development around diversity, equity, and inclusion
- The number and percent of the STEM Division's courses, internships, and research opportunities that include lessons that emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion
- The number of women, minority, and international students who are enrolled in and complete STEM programs, workforce certificate requirements, and/or transfer to four-year programs in a STEM field of study.

## CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective D.1.** The STEM Division will promote, honor, and advance diversity and inclusion throughout their classrooms and learning community and uphold equitable access for all students to learning resources and experiences.

- **Strategy D.1.A.** STEM Division will focus on the increased recruitment and retention of female, minority, and international students across all STEM fields/courses of study, with the intention of strengthening gender and demographic diversity within STEM.
- **Strategy D.1.B.** Review STEM course curriculum and lessons to open opportunities to integrate diversity and inclusion to increase relevance and connection with students
- **Strategy D.1.C.** Increase options and opportunities for increased early exposure to STEM courses and programs in elementary, middle, and high schools

**Objective D.2.** STEM faculty and staff will be trained and empowered to collaborate with diverse groups and to be inclusive in their professional choices, demeanor, and decision-making processes.

- **Strategy D.2.A.** STEM Division faculty and staff will engage in Cultural Awareness and Diversity study and training to eliminate potential bias in practice, access, and resource allocation.
- **Strategy D.2.B.** Provide STEM students with specific information and insight into program and course requirements to allow them to have a deeper dive into these courses and programs to make informed decisions on coursework and program commitment.
- **Strategy D.2.C.** Engage STEM Division faculty and staff in the College's efforts to host workshops, conferences, study circles, and other community sessions regarding diversity and inclusion topics and considerations.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Ensuring that systems are in place to provide all STEM Division faculty and staff with equitable access to diversity and inclusion trainings and professional development events

- Communicating broadly about diversity and inclusion, and providing all STEM students, faculty, and staff with opportunities to provide anonymous feedback regarding the Division's continuing work on diversity and inclusion and any issues that may arise.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION**

*The STEM Division will offer our students guided access to an innovative set of educational and training programs, attendance, options, and high-impact instructional practices that provide them with clear pathways to success and high-quality, convenient options for reaching their learning goals.*

### **CONTEXT**

STEM Division faculty are teachers, facilitators, and instructors whose foundational mission is to provide the highest-quality instruction to their students. As information and new learning emerges in STEM fields, the faculty prides itself in staying on the leading edge of innovation, understanding, and immersion in these ever-changing fields. The pandemic emphasized the need for greater differentiation and innovation in instructional delivery. Despite these challenges, the faculty remains open to practicing and implementing a combination of hybrid, hyflex, online, and traditional face-to-face instructional modes to ensure that learning, modeling, and instructional integrity is never compromised. STEM Division also remains deeply committed to engaging students in authentic inquiry, experimental design, and research opportunities.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

To assess the impact of its work on Instructional Innovation, STEM Division intends to regularly report on and review the follow indicators:

- The number of students who receive academic credit for workforce credentials or through credit for prior learning
- The number and percentage of courses and programs that are offered fully online
- The number of available modalities and modes for individual courses and overall programs
- The number of enrolled STEM Division students who are engaged in internships, externships, research, and experimental studies with community partner agencies
- The level of consistency in student grades and other key student outcomes among course modalities and across different student demographic groups



## CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Instructional Innovation, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective I.1:** Enrolled STEM Division students will have ready and equitable access to the highest-quality coursework, programs, and instruction

- **Strategy I.1.A.** Provide students with expanded options for evening and weekend STEM classes and lab sections and greater flexibility options for enrolled STEM students who are engaged in full-time employment, including flexible office hours and advisory for students who work or who cannot commit to face-to-face appointments with their professors/advisors.
- **Strategy I.1.B.** Structure and schedule intentional transdisciplinary and departmental planning time to create strong curriculum connections within STEM courses and programs with stronger and intentional scaffolding of skills and concepts across STEM fields
- **Strategy I.1.C.** Invest resources in STEM Division to design studios that support instructional development of course material for asynchronous courses, lab safety procedures, and experimental design procedures.
- **Strategy I.1.D.** Examine, explore, and design programs of study and certification tracks in innovative and leading-edge technologies and fields in STEM, including, but not limited to, cybersecurity, drone technology, digital design, and robotics to attract new enrollment and to anticipate future career and workforce fields.
- **Strategy I.1.E.** Upgrade academic classroom and lab spaces to support innovative practices and technology to ensure that changing technologies and upgraded knowledge in STEM is supported by and within our instructional practices.
- **Strategy I.1.F.** Monitor all STEM Divisions courses to ensure that the instructional methodology matches the modality for instructional practice and to ensure that that integrity of the instructional programming and certifications, programming, and degrees is not lost, especially in the case of shorter five-week courses and degree tracks for STEM students.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Recognizing that access varies between every person, and that a more complete understanding of each student and the challenges that they face is critical to improving that access

- Ensuring that there are systems in place to provide equitable attention to and consideration of students who attend the same course through different modalities/modes
- Communicating about instructional innovations and new options for students in a way that is accessible to all and helps them to be informed when making choices about attendance methods and course types.
- Reviewing student success data, by modality/mode, and addressing equity issues that are specific to one or more mode of course delivery.

## **POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS**

*The STEM Division will have flourishing relationships with education, industry, locality, and other community partners that rise to new levels of engagement and generate clear, demonstrable benefits for our students and our Peninsula community.*

### **CONTEXT**

The STEM Division recognizes that it has an integral and important role to play as an educational and community partner. As a division that works and educates in dynamic and ever-changing fields that directly support the vital economic engines of the Virginia Peninsula, STEM faculty and staff must maintain, cultivate, and grow partnerships and the depth of these relationships to best serve their students. Partnering with community business, military, non-profit, and government agencies, STEM Division can influence positive outcomes and community support.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- The number of active partnerships that the STEM Division maintains
- The number of area employers and STEM Division students who actively participate in work-based learning programs
- The number of community forums, events, and programs that are sponsored or delivered by STEM Division faculty and staff
- The number of grants both applied for and successfully awarded to the STEM Division in partnership with the College and business and community partners
- Employment and graduation data for all graduates and certificate recipients from STEM Division

## CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Powerful Partnerships, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective P.1.** Students will have new and expanded opportunities to participate in work-based learning opportunities, innovative educational partnerships, and civic activities and partnerships in the Peninsula community.

- **Strategy P.1.A.** Embed within the student advising process in the STEM Division an individualized student plan for research, internships, externships, and community volunteer opportunities to encourage and increase student placement and community presence/participation.
- **Strategy P.1.B.** Engage with regional four-year colleges, local businesses, and federal installations to promote research opportunities for students and to expose them to leading edge scientific, math, technology, and engineering research and fields of study.
- **Strategy P.1.C.** Establish community service opportunities for all active registered STEM students to gain a wide variety of volunteer and service roles across all sectors of our Peninsula community
- **Strategy P.1.D.** Engage a STEM Division Advisory Board to work both internally with the Division and in conjunction with the College to develop community partnerships and to work with other Division Advisory Boards for stronger communication and collaboration in reviewing current and active business and community partnerships.

**Objective P.2.** STEM Division Faculty and Staff will more fully engage with the civic life of the Peninsula community.

- **Strategy P.2.A.** Encourage, schedule, and host business and employee forums, speaker's bureaus, team-teaching opportunities, and employment and interviewing fairs to actively recruit and place students and explore them to STEM fields and careers that are present on the Virginia Peninsula.
- **Strategy P.2.B.** Work with local school divisions to plan, promote and increase student interest and attendance in STEM Division summer camps and research/lab experiences for students in grades 4-12 and to expose them to STEM career fields and enrollment with the College for STEM study.
- **Strategy P.2.C.** Encourage STEM Faculty and Staff to engage and partner with civic and business entities across the College's service region to promote STEM careers and fields of study and to connect employers to our students.

- **Strategy P.2.D.** Showcase STEM community partnerships and community presence on the College and Division website pages to promote and advertise STEM's presence in our regional service area.
- **Strategy P.2.E.** Create adult learning opportunities for non-degree or transfer student/regional citizens in service to our region to allow them to participate in STEM courses for non-credit to enhance marketing opportunities for the Division.

## **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Intentionally and purposefully inviting a diverse representation of people and perspectives to all conversations regarding STEM initiatives and proposed partnerships.
- Establishing systems across STEM Division that promote diversity of people and perspectives on program-specific advisory boards, research and lab study opportunities, grant development teams and corporate and business partnerships promotion.

## **MODERNIZED MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

*The STEM Division will more fully connect with our community and clearly articulate the value inherent in attaining one of its credentials, so that residents of the Virginia Peninsula will consider STEM Division courses, degrees, and certificates as their preferred option for postsecondary education and training.*

## **CONTEXT**

Focus group conversations in STEM Division clearly outlined the need for STEM Division to be visible throughout our community. The faculty and staff also strongly identified the need for STEM faculty, staff, and students to be strong partners across our community as ambassadors of the Division to all area stakeholders. Marketing was identified as an area of challenge for STEM Division and the College as a whole. With government contracting, military and government agency installations, technology startups and corporations, and a host of emerging corporate fields that are firmly grounded in STEM, the Division has a tremendous opportunity to partner and lead in promoting STEM education and careers for PK-12 and post-secondary students across the Virginia Peninsula.

## SUCCESS INDICATORS

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- The total number of students enrolled in STEM Division programs for academic credit and workforce development courses.
- The level of traffic on STEM Division webpages
- The level of engagement and interaction of the community with STEM Division social media platforms
- STEM Division brand awareness and presence/involvement of faculty, staff, and students in community events, activities, and related programs
- Number of STEM Division faculty and staff outreach opportunities and community connections to programs, courses, research, lab, and grant opportunities.

## CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Modernized Marketing and Recruitment, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective M.1.** Students will be engaged in a variety of digital platforms in a more intentional and thorough manner.

- **Strategy M.1.A.** Provide stronger academic supports for STEM students enrolled in asynchronous courses that builds self-direction, independence, and pacing for greater success and achievement
- **Strategy M.1.B.** Ensure that all STEM students have access to online learning and resources, to include WiFi, hardware, tutoring, and increased access to additional sections of courses as needed.

**Objective M.2.** Students will experience a 'Culture of Caring' throughout the entire STEM Division in its messaging and outreach

- **Strategy M.2.A.** Develop and market videos, social media, and marketing materials that openly invite students who are interested in STEM fields to apply and enroll at the College to capture increased student enrollments and interest in STEM, with the specific focus on increasing STEM enrollment among female and minority students.
- **Strategy M.2.B.** Provide ongoing, meaningful, and differentiated professional development in cross-cultural understanding and cultural competency to STEM faculty and staff to identify and support student needs and understand the unique cultural identifies and experiences of each student.

- **Strategy M.2.C.** Work with STEM faculty and staff to improve processes and options to support and remediate STEM students who are experiencing academic difficulty.
- **Strategy M.2.D.** Consistently and equitably extend school outreach programming and partnerships to service area school division upper elementary, middle, and high schools to expose students to STEM opportunities, careers, and courses to generate interest in STEM options for students and to promote summer camps and programs, such as weekend academies, for interested students.
- **Strategy M.2.E.** Explore options for flexible advisory and office hours among STEM faculty to meet individual student demands and schedules, shifting to areas of online advising and potential evening and weekend advising hours for assistance and support across academic, social, emotional, and life skills areas.
- **Strategy M.2.F.** Consistently track and maintain communication with STEM graduates to mark their progress and placement after graduation or transfer from the College to better understand where they are employed, what they are earning, and to have graduates return to campus to work with current STEM students to inspire and encourage them in their specific fields of study.

**Objective M.3.** STEM Division employees will serve as ambassadors in the community and across the College.

- **Strategy M.3.A.** Encourage STEM Division faculty and staff to seek active and meaningful relationships and partnerships with businesses, non-profits, military, school division, local government, civic, and faith organizations to ensure that the mission and vision of STEM Division is present and active in our community
- **Strategy M.3.B.** Develop programming, guest lecturer and speaker opportunities, camps, programs, career speaker and other outreach opportunities and partnerships with businesses, corporations, four-year colleges and universities, and PK-12 school divisions within our service region that provide exposure and interest in STEM fields and careers.

## **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Hosting internal and community-based events focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion and designed to break down barriers of access to STEM study
- Ensuring that STEM marketing and outreach efforts and information accurately represent and speak to the diversity of the STEM Division.

## EMPLOYEE INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

*STEM Division will be a thriving community of personal enrichment and continual learning – one where all faculty and staff feel valued and can see how their personal and professional growth contributes to the success of the STEM Division and its students.*

### CONTEXT

The Mission and Vision of STEM Division focuses in part on innovation, inspiring students, and changing lives through collaboration, connections, and partnerships. Our students need to see STEM faculty and staff model for them what these interactions and behaviors look, feel, and sound like every time that they enter their classrooms or are on campus to see what is involved in collaborative, collegial, and cooperative relationships. High-quality, ongoing professional development, training and programming that focuses on these areas, as well as equity, inclusion, and service, will allow STEM Division faculty and staff to continue to be leaders in their fields and to ensure that our future scientists, programmers/technicians, trade professionals, engineers, and mathematicians incorporate these characteristics into their own practice. By focusing on employee experience, development, and retention, STEM Division empowers our students to succeed.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Employee retention rates within the STEM Division
- Rates of diversity, equity, and inclusion training completion by STEM Division faculty and staff
- The number and percentage of STEM Division faculty and staff who participate in College- and Division-sponsored professional development activities each year
- Student satisfaction rates with STEM Division offices, faculty, and services

### CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Employee Investment and Development, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective E.1.** Students will experience streamlined services that achieve better efficiencies and improve on the overall student experience.

- **Strategy E.1.A.** Review current vendors and purchasing processes within STEM Division to ensure that access to necessary and needed goods and services is the most efficient and that vendors offer the most value and fastest access to goods and services.

- **Strategy E.1.B.** Improve the coordination of announcements and information from departments within STEM Division, including advisory and workforce development, to ensure that information is clear, transparent and available at all times through multiple platforms/mediums
- **Strategy E.1.C.** Provide advisors with consistent and standardized information compiled in an FAQ-style format to provide to STEM students in response to their various standard questions concerning financial aid, enrollment, and registration
- **Strategy E.1.D.** Formalize and structure more purposeful transdisciplinary and department planning time across all STEM Division fields to provide stronger scaffolding and connection of skills and concepts across the curriculum for learners
- **Strategy E.1.E.** Redesign and remodel/repurpose academic building spaces to provide greater support and creative spaces for innovative instructional delivery and upgrade lab facilities to provide leading edge equipment that reflects most recent technologies to support these innovative practices

**Objective E.2.** STEM Division Employees will have access to comprehensive employee development programming to encourage personal growth opportunities and professional enrichment

- **Strategy E.2.A.** Encourage personal development and training for STEM Division faculty and staff to include wellness opportunities that promote personal wellbeing, mindfulness, and social-emotional wellbeing, such as relaxation techniques or yoga
- **Strategy E.2.B.** Provide stronger involvement, collaboration, professional development and partnership with STEM Division adjunct faculty, particularly in their onboarding to the Division and their sustainability and growth
- **Strategy E.2.C.** Review current STEM faculty evaluation processes to ensure that they incorporate measurable goals, inspire high performance, encourage faculty ownership and accountability, and support open dialog and feedback loops focusing on continuous improvement.
- **Strategic E.2.D.** STEM Faculty will create and deliver adult learning opportunities for our mature community members to share STEM fields and learning for non-credit experiences that will enhance marketing, recruitment, and awareness opportunities for STEM Division
- **Strategy E.2.E.** Engage STEM Division employees in professional development and meaningful dialog that will broaden their understanding of equity gaps in student success and focus on equity-based, high-impact teaching and learning practices.



- **Strategy E.2.E.** Complete cultural competency, change leadership, and positive communication training for all STEM Division employees
- **Strategy E.2.F.** Create shared and universal essential agreements for STEM Division departments and for the larger Division that govern the processes, practices, and interactions found within every meeting to ensure that collaboration, cooperation, civility, and respect are the foundation of each meeting.
- **Strategy E.2.G.** Expand internal opportunities for leadership development and succession for STEM faculty and staff who are seeking to obtain leadership opportunities within the College.

### **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Providing all STEM Division employees with access to the same set of professional development opportunities
- Ensuring that there are systems in place within the Division and its departments for anonymous/confidential feedback on processes and professional development programs and activities
- Communicating professional development opportunities to STEM Division employees regularly and broadly

## TRANSPARENT AND AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

*The STEM Division will foster a rich culture of information exchange and idea sharing that focuses on clear, timely, and repeated dissemination of the key information for our employees and students, as well as generous avenues and opportunities for conversation, collegial discourse, and feedback.*

### CONTEXT

Communication was an often-identified area of challenge with the STEM Division. New and improved methods of ensuring that accurate information flows through the organization to all stakeholders in STEM are required. Opportunities for authentic feedback and response are also important and desired by the STEM faculty and staff. Modeling and reinforcing strong communication skills that are respectful, that value the ideas, feedback, and concerns of individuals, and promote the open and generous sharing and exchanging of ideas will make an incredibly positive impact on our STEM faculty, staff, students, and community.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Utilization of established conversation and feedback channels in terms of questions, comments, and feedback from STEM students and employees
- The frequency of positive response rates regarding STEM student communication on the annual Student Experience Survey
- The frequency of positive response rates among STEM faculty and staff regarding Communication and Shared Governance on the Great Colleges to Work For Survey

### CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Through its work on Transparent and Authentic Communication, the STEM Division will achieve the following core objectives:

**Objective T.1.** Students will have clear channels of communication with the College to ask questions, resolve issues, and receive the information they need to be successful and feel valued

- **Strategy T.1.A.** Standardize and provide official published STEM Division information in a single identified location for students with feedback channels for students where appropriate
- **Strategy T.1.B.** Host virtual and in-person town halls and forums in STEM Division to provide broad and transparent information and updates to students and employees, allowing time for questions, feedback, and conversation

- **Strategy T.1.C.** Communicate with STEM Division students through a multitude and variety of media platforms for greater equity of access to connect with current and prospective students

**Objective T.2.** STEM Division faculty and staff will be more fully engaged in College initiatives and changes that impact their work, and will be able to plan ahead and share their ideas and expertise for improvement

- **Strategy T.2.A.** Work with new STEM Division employees in their orientation and onboarding processes to include authentic communication and make this a component of each STEM employees Employee Work Profile and annual performance evaluation for consistency and fairness
- **Strategy T.2.B.** Identify and publish consistent communication for STEM Division and provide to faculty and staff in a single location sets of official communication and feedback channels.
- **Strategy T.2.C.** Integrate principals of shared governance and shared leadership into the decision-making fabric and essential agreements of the STEM Division
- **Strategy T.2.D.** Provide broad communication to the community from STEM Division and identify and publish materials and official communication and feedback channels for community members regarding current programs and events offered and led by STEM Division faculty and staff

## **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The STEM Division will promote equity across all areas of these goals, objectives, and strategies by:

- Ensuring that systems are in place to make key information available to all STEM students and employees, regardless of their role or their type of enrollment with the Division
- Utilizing an multitude and variety of media platforms to communicate with current and prospective STEM students, so that all have access
- Creating feedback mechanism and loops that allow STEM students and employees to anonymously provide feedback and concerns in terms of their communication preferences or level of access to information that they require.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The STEM Division, like the College, realizes that the planning and implementation process is a continuous improvement cycle. Beginning in the summer and fall of 2021, As the implementation of this plan begins, STEM Division leadership will collaborate to review the goals, objectives, and strategies of their strategic plan and assign primary responsibility to specific champions within their Division who will be empowered to monitor the progress for the goal, objective, and strategy.

The STEM Division will also review the Success Indicators for each Goal to ensure that the data set for each item is currently assessed and that annual measurable feedback for the performance indicator can be verified. As the College will be providing annual measurable progress through the reporting of its Success Indicator data, STEM Division will also annually report their plan progression in this same manner through an annual and transparent public presentation by STEM leadership. As this information is reviewed, the mission, vision, and core beliefs will also be revisited to consider any necessary updates and the goals, objectives, and strategies will be reviewed to ensure that these components are squarely at the forefront of all programming and actionable items for the STEM Division.