
ROANOKE
HIGHER EDUCATION
CENTER
STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2023

ROANOKE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

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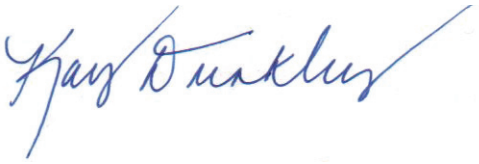
INTRODUCTION

The Roanoke Higher Education Center is unique in the number and types of organizations that have joined forces in one location to expand access to educational resources at every level to citizens of the Roanoke region. Presently we have 10 colleges and organizations who are delivering over 200 programs that lead to a GED, an associate, bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree. Individuals can also earn workforce certifications and endorsements.

Since we first opened our doors, we have experienced many changes in the world of work, in the way instruction is delivered and in the ways we are asked to serve our stakeholders. This document outlines our goals and objectives through June 2023 and will serve as a blueprint on how we plan to adapt and prepare for expansion and growth in an ever-changing environment.



Kay Dunkley



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

This report is a result of a participative, purposeful and inclusive process to gather input that would inform our thinking and the development of this plan. Over 180 representatives from key stakeholder groups provided feedback over a ten month period ending in September 2019. Their input was solicited through a combination of surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Those engaged include the Roanoke Higher Education Authority (RHEA) Board of Trustees, the Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation Board of Directors, member institutions, business leaders, RHEC students and RHEC staff.

VISION

The Roanoke Higher Education Center, known throughout the Roanoke region as a dynamic learning community of colleges and organizations, responds to the evolving needs of the current and future workforce.

MISSION

The Roanoke Higher Education Center develops partnerships and maintains a state-of-the-art learning facility that provides citizens of the Roanoke region access to training, certifications and degrees.

We do this by:

- Partnering with colleges and workforce organizations to align academic program offerings with business needs and job growth;
- Providing high-quality classroom and meeting space, including distance learning technology and laboratories;
- Delivering services to support students to successfully complete programs and find employment;
- Offering test preparation services to help individuals achieve success on standardized tests;
- Hosting an educational testing center to administer graduate and distance learning exams, standardized tests, prior learning assessments and industry specific tests.

KEY PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

When designing any strategic plan, it is critical to understand the trends challenging the world of work so that you can anticipate and pro-actively mitigate threats and take advantage of opportunities. These planning assumptions were developed after conducting a scanning and forecasting exercise with key stakeholders.

The current business model requires modification to ensure financial stability

- The current business model does not provide the flexibility to retain and attract new members.
- When higher education institutions experience budget cuts, satellite locations are at risk.
- There are significant changes in how instruction is delivered. The continued popularity of online classes decreases the need for leasing space.
- State appropriations vary year-to-year; consequently, institutions must establish additional funding streams.

Center programming should reflect areas of current and future employment demands

- The inclusion of RHEC in the Innovation Corridor pathway may result in opportunities to partner with the VTC School of Medicine and the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.
- Local employers are looking for professional developmental opportunities for their staffs, including managerial, leadership and executive programs.
- Employers want training programs that are specific to the skill gaps of their current and future workforce.
- More and more individuals seek training programs that lead to certifications and endorsements.
- There is an urgent need to increase the number of students exposed to and interested in exploring STEM careers.

The Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation is critical for funding enhanced program opportunities and services

- A thoughtful and well-executed donor development campaign with fundraising priorities is critical to our ability to address the needs of students and partner institutions in a challenging funding environment.
- It is necessary to cultivate interest from the business and industry community to identify individuals to serve on the Authority and Foundation Boards. The Center can benefit from their expertise and connections.
- Additional revenue streams are needed for special projects, to add new staff, provide student success and career centers and to develop new programming based upon current and future job demands.

Additional support services are necessary to ensure program completion

- Adult learners returning to school often need tutoring and refresher courses in many areas, such as writing, math, technology, study skills and research.
- Test preparation services assist with the successful completion of certifications and endorsements that facilitate upward mobility, lateral job moves and/or increased earnings.

Career services are needed

- Career Centers assist students and workers with resume writing, interview preparation, portfolio development and presentation, and career exploration and job searches.
- We must make it easier for students to connect with employment opportunities, including full- and part-time positions and internships.

We must enhance the student experience

- We need to improve the lines of communication among the Center staff, member representatives and students.
- Students want more quiet study areas as well as expanded hours at the Center so they can study, work on projects and have access to open laboratory times.
- Current Wi-Fi capacity is not adequate for the student/building needs.
- For many students, the Higher Education Center is their campus/college experience. Students want to build a sense of community, through networking-type events and activities.
- Students are interested in a gym/workout space and wellness services.
- There is a need to expand library services to include more testing manuals.
- We should consider a small sundry store to sell snacks, supplies and collegiate merchandise.

Facility improvements will be ongoing

- The main building, built in 1931, is sound and well maintained but requires continual upgrades and renovations.
- Learning spaces/classrooms will require retrofitting based upon the needs of our partners and their programs.
- Day rental meeting spaces will entail upgrades. Meeting and teleconferencing services for businesses, partnering institutions and the community are in demand.
- Parking is and will remain a significant challenge.

Technology will continue to evolve

- Learning spaces/classrooms will continually need to be updated with state-of-the-art technology.
- Technology upgrades and training for our staff will be ongoing.
- There is an increasing need for IT support during the evenings and on Saturdays.

To stay competitive, we need to attract and retain qualified and skilled staff

- Competitive compensation and benefits are critical to retaining and attracting quality talent.
- Professional development and training opportunities will support retention and increase job satisfaction.
- Continuous review of job descriptions ensures our ability to meet the changing needs of our stakeholders.

Increased visibility with the business community and with potential donors is important

- We must leverage the 20th anniversary as an opportunity to demonstrate the economic impact of the Center's partner institutions and programs.
- There is a lack of understanding about how the Center operates.

GOALS–FISCAL YEARS 2020-2023

The following goals provide the Center with a pathway for the future and gives us a blueprint for achieving them.

- Ensure financial sustainability in an ever-changing environment
- Expand student support services
- Establish a Career Center that serves both students and citizens
- Expand access to programming that aligns with regional workforce needs
- Address planned and unplanned infrastructure needs
- Increase awareness and visibility of the Center
- Continue to attract and retain quality staff

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives for each goal:

GOAL #1: ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY

OBJECTIVES:

- Modify our business model to provide flexibility to respond to changes in the demand for leased space
- Activate and cultivate the Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation and its Board of Directors
- Initiate a donor development campaign to diversify our funding sources and expand services

GOAL #2: EXPAND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a student services center that provides tutoring, refresher courses in writing, math, study skills, research and test preparation services
- Create a program of regular networking opportunities and other activities to build a sense of community
- Provide access to gym/workout space and wellness services
- Evaluate requests from students who wish to have weekend and late evening access to the building
- Retrofit space to provide more quiet study areas

GOAL #3: ESTABLISH A CAREER CENTER THAT SERVES STUDENTS AND CITIZENS

OBJECTIVES:

- Offer services to assist with resume writing, interview preparation, portfolio development and presentation
- Offer assistance with career exploration and skills assessment
- Make connections with employers to advertise full and part-time jobs as well as internships
- Leverage Foundation funding to underwrite the Career Center

GOAL #4: EXPAND ACCESS TO PROGRAMMING THAT ALIGNS WITH REGIONAL WORKFORCE NEEDS

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify program needs, gaps and opportunities
- Utilize a systematic approach to encourage Center partners to respond to programming needs
- Recruit partners to offer certificate and degree programs that meet current and future job requirements
- Identify professional development training programs that are specific to the skill gaps that exist within our current and future workforce

- Attract programs that expose and encourage students to explore STEM careers
- Leverage Foundation donations to encourage the development of an innovation fund to incentivize new programming

GOAL #5: ADDRESS PLANNED AND UNPLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

OBJECTIVES:

- Outline a plan to upgrade meeting spaces and classrooms
- Develop a capital plan for facility maintenance and upgrades
- Expand Wi-Fi capacity
- Identify land to convert to parking spaces
- Expand the testing center

GOAL #6: INCREASE AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY

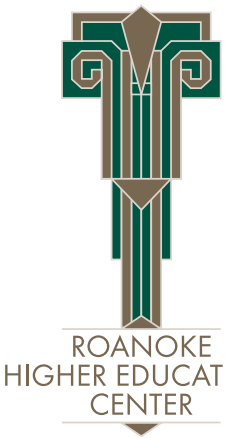
OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan
- Leverage the 20th anniversary to share information about the way the Center has contributed to the economic impact of the region
- Leverage community outreach and engagement opportunities

GOAL #7: ATTRACT AND RETAIN QUALITY STAFF

OBJECTIVES:

- Conduct a market study to understand competitive compensation levels and develop a budget to address the needs
- Identify and provide professional development opportunities
- Evaluate and increase staffing levels in order to accomplish the goals and objectives of the 2020-2023 strategic plan
- Ensure regular technology upgrades and appropriate training are provided



ROANOKE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER

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RHEC Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday	7:00 AM – 10:30 PM
Saturday	7:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Sunday	Closed