

Southwest Texas College

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

Mid-Plan Report



October 17, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dr. Hector Gonzales
President

The foundation of Southwest Texas College's strategic plan is its mission statement. Explicit in its mission one can know why the college exists and what it intends to achieve:

Our Mission

Southwest Texas College enriches lives and advances growth through the education of our diverse communities.

Beliefs and Ways of Being

We aspire to achieve **excellence** by purposefully:

- committing to success
- inspiring trust, transparency, professionalism and accountability
- engaging all with empathy and care

We embrace **inclusivity** by:

- valuing every individual as unique and whole
- fostering a culture of acceptance
- respecting diversity of thought

We champion **opportunities** for:

- life-long learning
- professional, personal, and community growth
- institutional innovation

Southwest Texas College advances its mission through strategic plan goals and objectives. The strategic planning process at SWTX is a continuous cycle of review, revision, implementation, and evaluation. Each unit within the college has operationalized objectives and targets that align directly with these goals.

At its core, the strategic plan is structured around three broad goals: Start/Enroll, Persist/Succeed, and Complete/Ascend. These goals are supported by specific Strategic Objectives, set within defined timeframes, to target improvements in key areas. All planning activities are tied to these objectives, ensuring alignment with the college's mission.

- **Goal 1: Start/Enroll**

SWTX will foster a sense of inclusivity and engagement for all students and stakeholders with empathy, care, and outreach.

- **Goal 2: Persist/Succeed**

SWTX will champion opportunities for student success.

- **Goal 3: Complete/Ascend**

SWTX will increase personal, professional, and community growth





INTRODUCTION




This year's Mid-Plan Review (2021-2026) reflects how Southwest Texas College has continued to adapt to the new post-pandemic normal. Building on the past two years of transformation brought on by COVID-19, this review involved a deep reflection on our identity, values, and the evolving role of higher education. The pandemic forced a rapid shift to 100% online learning, prompting the development of strategies to engage students, empower faculty, and ensure the college remained a reliable resource for our communities during challenging times.

Through this review, we recognized the need to evolve from our 60+ years of established operations. We reaffirmed our mission to “enrich lives and advance growth through the education of our diverse communities,” while addressing new challenges like declining enrollment and student disconnection. The strategic planning process began with fundamental questions about our purpose, which led to new goals for institutional progress.

As we implemented these changes, areas for improvement in leadership were identified, leading to a necessary reorganization that streamlined our administrative structure and introduced a more rigorous evaluation system. Leadership performance is now directly tied to key performance indicators and measurable student success outcomes, aligning with our strategic goals.

This review has been a pivotal step in ensuring that SWTX remains responsive to the changing educational landscape while staying committed to continuous improvement and our core mission.





EVALUATION



Southwest Texas College is dedicated to enriching lives and advancing personal and community growth by providing quality education to its diverse student population. Through our strategic plan, we aim to foster a sense of inclusivity and engagement, and to empower students for academic and professional success. This mid-plan report provides an overview of the progress made toward the strategic objectives outlined for the 2021-2026 period.


Our goals—Start/Enroll, Persist/Succeed, and Complete/Ascend—guide all planning and activities at SWTX, ensuring alignment with our mission. This review reflects updated baseline metrics that comply with state and federal standards, allowing for more accurate assessments of student and institutional performance.

Baseline Metrics Updates

The baseline figures in current assessments differ from those previously reported. The original data, derived from a Cohort Study using an outdated assessment tool, has been replaced due to updates in industry standards and evaluation methods.

New baseline metrics, aligned with state and federal requirements, offer a more accurate and current reflection of student progress and institutional performance. These updates allow for more precise comparisons and ensure the credibility of our assessments.

While the original figures provided valuable historical insights, the revised baselines are crucial for maintaining accuracy as we move forward.



Goal 1: Start/Enroll

SWTX will foster a sense of inclusivity and engagement for all students and stakeholders with empathy, care, and outreach.

Strategic Objective 1: Increase the efficiency and capacity of student enrollment.

- 1.1a Increase the efficiency of enrollment management from 78% to 90% (+12%) by 2026.
 - Progress: The progress on Strategic Objective 1.1a, which aims to increase the efficiency of enrollment management from 78% to 90% by 2026, has not yet been reported for the 2021-2024 period. While data is still forthcoming, the institution is continuing its efforts to implement strategies aimed at improving enrollment processes and optimizing management systems. Ongoing initiatives are expected to yield measurable results in the near future as we approach the 2026 target.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1.1a	78%	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available

- 1.1b Increase enrollment of students by 40% (+500 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: The data for Objective 1.1b, which targets a 40% increase in student enrollment by 2026, shows a positive trend. After an initial decline from a baseline of 6,663 to 5,964 students in 2021-22, enrollment numbers rebounded to 6,238 in 2022-23 and further increased to 6,625 in 2023-24. Although progress toward the 2026 goal is ongoing, these recent gains indicate the institution is on the right path, with a strong recovery and steady growth toward meeting the target.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1.1b	6663	5964	6238	6625

Goal 2: Persist/Succeed

SWTX will champion opportunities for student success.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Increase the number and percentage of students achieving 15/30/CC

- 2.1a: Increase the percentage of FTIC non-dual credit students who achieve 15 credit hours in their first semester from 6.1% (62 students) to 16% (163 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: After a dip in 2021-22, the percentage of FTIC non-dual credit students achieving 15 credit hours in their first semester has steadily increased over the past two academic years. Currently, 6.2% of students have reached this milestone in 2023-24, reflecting a positive improvement from the baseline of 6.1% and demonstrating steady progress toward the strategic plan goal.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.1a	62/1016 6.1%	43/921 4.6%	57/1027 5.5%	70/1128 6.2%

- 2.1b: Increase the percentage of part-time students achieving 15 credit hours within their first academic year from 45.8% (292 students) to 54% (345 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: As of 2023-24, 42.4% of part-time students achieved 15 credit hours in their first academic year, reflecting steady progress from 41.3% in 2021-22. Despite this slight dip, the institution currently remains on track to meet the 2026 goal.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.1b	292/638 45.8%	270/654 41.3%	313/732 42.8%	328/773 42.4%

- 2.1c: Increase the percentage of FTIC non-dual credit students who achieve 30 credit hours in one academic year from 6.6% (32 students) to 17% (82 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: The College has made consistent progress, with the percentage of students achieving 30 credit hours rising from 6.6% to 8.9% over the past three years. Although there was a slight dip to 8.7% in 2023-24, the overall trend remains positive, indicating steady improvement toward the 2026 target.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.1c	32/483 6.6%	30/454 6.6%	50/561 8.9%	54/622 8.7%

- 2.1d: Increase the percentage of students who transfer from dual credit at SWTX with at least 15 SCH to any 4-year institution from 46.8% (297 students) to 56% (355 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: The College has experienced a declining trend in the percentage of students achieving the target, starting from a baseline of 46.8%. In 2021-22, the percentage remained stable at 36.1%, but it dropped significantly to 25.7% in 2022-23 and further to 21.1% in 2023-24. This downward trend underscores the need for targeted interventions to reverse the decline and improve student outcomes in this area.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.1d	297/634 46.8%	196/543 36.1%	135/525 25.7%	111/526 21.1%

- 2.1e: Increase the percentage of academic students who become core complete at the end of their second fall semester from 11.3% (92 students) to 21% (171 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: In the baseline year of 2020-21, Objective 2.1e had 92 out of 816 students meeting the target, achieving a rate of 11.3%. However, a downward trend has been observed in subsequent years. Data for the 2023-24 academic year is currently unavailable because the two required fall semesters have not yet concluded.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.1e	92/816 11.3%	43/714 6.0%	29/804 3.6%	2 fall semesters not passed

Strategic Objective 2.2: Increase the one-year persistence rate.

- 2.2a: Increase the one-year fall to fall graduation and retention in the same program rate [persistence] rate of first-time in college (FTIC) students from 50.8% (516 students) to 60% (610 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: Objective 2.2a has shown consistent progress over the past four academic years. In the baseline year of 2020-21, the achievement rate was 50.8%. The following year, 2021-22, saw a slight decline to 50.5%. However, in 2022-23, the percentage increased to 53.9%, showing a notable improvement. For 2023-24, the trend remains positive, with 53.2% meeting the objective. While there has been a slight decrease in percentage from the previous year, the overall increase in both the number of students and the percentage since the baseline reflects steady progress toward the objective.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
2.2a	516/1016 50.8%	465/921 50.5%	554/1027 53.9%	600/1128 53.2%

Goal 3: Complete/Ascend

SWTX will increase personal, professional, and community growth

Strategic Objective 3.1: Increase completion rate.

- 3.1a: Increase the two-year completion rate of full-time FTIC students from 23% (85 students) to 33% (122 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: Objective 3.1a has demonstrated significant improvement over the past few academic years. In the baseline year of 2020-21, 23% met the objective. This increased to 34.4% in 2021-22 and further rose to 42.4% in 2022-23, exceeding the target for 2026. Data for the 2023-24 academic year is not yet available, as the necessary two-year period has not yet passed. This overall upward trend indicates steady progress, further exceeding the original goal.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
3.1a	85/369 23.0%	92/267 34.4%	125/295 42.4%	2 years not passed

- 3.1b: Increase the 3-year completion rate of part-time FTIC students from 18.8% (120 students) to 28% (179 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: Objective 3.1b started with a baseline completion rate of 18.8% in 2020-21. By 2021-22, significant progress was made, with the rate rising to 27.4%, nearing the 2026 goal. Data for 2022-23 and 2023-24 is not yet available, as the required three-year period has not yet passed. This upward trend suggests steady progress toward meeting, and potentially surpassing, the target by 2026.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
3.1b	120/640 18.8%	179/654 27.4%	3 years not passed	3 years not passed

Strategic Objective 3.2: Increase the 3-year transfer rate of transfer eligible FTIC students from 31.9% (261 students) to 42% (343 students) by 2026.



- Progress: The College has experienced progress in the three-year transfer rate. Starting from a baseline of 31.9%, the rate increased to 32.9% in 2021-22. Data for 2022-23 and 2023-24 is not yet available, as the required three-year period has not yet passed, but improvement thus far shows progress toward institutional targets.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
3.2	261/816 31.9%	235/714 32.9%	3 years not passed	3 years not passed

- 3.2a: Increase the percentage of FTIC students who transfer from SWTX to Sul Ross from 7.5% (76 students) to 18% (183 students) by 2026.
 - Progress: In 2021-22, the transfer rate dropped significantly to 4.2%, followed by a further decline in 2022-23 to 1.2%. In 2023-24, the transfer rate fell to its lowest point at 0.53%. This declining trend underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to support student success and to explore expanded options for degree attainment to reverse this trajectory.

Objective	Baseline 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
3.2a	76/1016 7.5%	39/921 4.2%	11/1027 1.2%	6/1128 .53%

- 3.3: Develop an institutional framework for mapped student pathways to include identification, monitoring student progress, and placement in a progressive advancement of a job or academic standing.
 - Progress: Progress on developing an institutional framework for mapped student pathways is underway, with a strong focus on creating and regularly updating clear programmatic pathways. Significant efforts are being made to prioritize transfer opportunities and build a system that continuously monitors student progress. Additionally, work is in progress to establish a structure for job placements, ensuring that students are prepared for both academic advancement and workforce entry. While measurable data is limited at this stage, the institution is making meaningful strides in laying the foundation for long-term student success through these initiatives.

- 
- 
- 3.4: Develop and sustain an organizational structure for strategic innovation and development.
 - Progress: Progress on developing and sustaining an organizational structure for strategic innovation and development is in its early stages. Preliminary efforts have focused on identifying key areas for strategic innovation and establishing foundational roles and processes to support future growth. While formal metrics and data are not yet available, the institution is actively laying the groundwork to foster a culture of continuous improvement and alignment with long-term strategic goals. As the structure continues to be refined and implemented, more concrete data will become available in future assessments.



CONCLUSION



As Southwest Texas College advances through the remainder of the strategic plan period, the institution remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering student success and institutional growth. Our next steps will prioritize the continuous evaluation of progress, ensuring that all targets are met and exceeded where possible. This will involve refining our strategies to address key areas of improvement, particularly in student retention, completion, and transfer rates, where we have already seen meaningful progress.

At a minimum, objectives 1.1a, 2.1d, and 3.2a will be revisited to develop an operationalized definition and improve measurement accuracy. Additionally, we are identifying opportunities to expand strategic objectives to better capture progress in technical and workforce programs, aligning with our mission to provide relevant, high-quality education that meets the evolving needs of our community.

In the realm of institutional innovation, SWTX has already taken steps to establish an organizational structure that fosters continuous improvement and strategic development. This forward-thinking approach ensures that the college remains agile and responsive to emerging trends in higher education, positioning us as a leader in both educational excellence and community engagement.

Southwest Texas College's dedication to strategic planning, innovation, and personalized student support continues to align with its mission of serving as a beacon of academic achievement and economic growth for the region. We are proud of the advancements made thus far and are confident that through ongoing collaboration, innovation, and data-driven decision-making, we will exceed our strategic goals.

Continued support and collaboration will be critical as we move ahead. Together, we can ensure that Southwest Texas College remains a leader in higher education, preparing the next generation of professionals, scholars, and community leaders. The road ahead is promising, and with the dedication of our faculty, staff, and administration, we are well-equipped to tackle the challenges of tomorrow and to transform lives for the better.

