

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY:

Reform 3.0

SOUTHWEST
TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



START. STRIDE. SOAR.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Southwest Tennessee Community College is where opportunity begins and futures take shape. Community is not simply part of our name—it is our purpose, our responsibility, and our enduring commitment to individuals and families whom we serve across the Mid-South. Over the past two decades, Southwest has evolved to meet the changing needs of our students and our region.

Today, we stand at a pivotal threshold. While expanding access and improving graduation rates remain important, they are no longer sufficient to ensure the long-term success of our students and prosperity of the Mid-South. True student success must be defined not only by what happens on our campuses, but by what happens after our students leave us—through meaningful careers, continued education, and upward mobility.

To meet this moment, we introduce our five-year blueprint through 2031: Pathways to Prosperity: Reform 3.0. This bold vision shifts our focus from completion alone to advancing economic and social mobility for every student we serve.

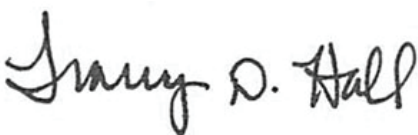
Our strategy is anchored in two critical priorities: strengthening workforce programs that connect students to high demand careers and increasing seamless transfer pathways to bachelor's degrees. We are also reimagining how we operate—moving beyond traditional silos to a student-centered model organized around Start. Stride. Soar.

As we move forward, our commitment is clear:

- We will help students **START** with clarity, removing barriers and connecting them to purposeful pathways.
- We will support them as they **STRIDE** with momentum, providing the tools, credentials, and guidance needed to stay on track.
- And we will empower them to **SOAR**, achieving success through career advancement, continued education, and family-sustaining wages.

Southwest Tennessee Community College remains dedicated to being more than a place of learning—we are a catalyst for transformation. Every credential earned here will serve as a pathway to prosperity, strengthening families, communities, and our entire region.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tracy D. Hall, President



Our Mission: At Southwest Tennessee Community College, community is our middle name. As a teaching and learning college, our students pursue associate degrees and technical certificates and engage in workforce development training to prepare them for the demands of an evolving marketplace. Our ability to change and adapt to uplift our students and serve our community makes us unique. At Southwest, we believe everyone deserves an opportunity.

Executive Overview & Strategic Direction

Southwest Tennessee Community College is advancing a bold five-year strategy through 2031 focused on economic and social mobility for students. Building on earlier reforms (access and completion), Reform 3.0 shifts the College's focus to post-graduation outcomes—ensuring students achieve meaningful careers, continued education, and upward mobility. Unlike traditional strategic plans organized around administrative divisions, **Start. Stride. Soar.** organizes the institution around the student journey.

Two institutional priorities anchor this work:

- **Workforce alignment with high-demand careers**
- **Seamless transfer pathways to bachelor's degrees**

The College will operate through a unified student-centered model:

START (entry), **STRIDE** (progress), **SOAR** (outcomes and prosperity).

The Case for Change: Why Memphis Needs Southwest

Southwest Tennessee Community College was founded on the belief that education changes lives. That belief remains true today. Yet the challenges facing Memphis and the Mid-South require a renewed commitment to ensuring that education serves as a pathway to opportunity, prosperity, and economic mobility. The region faces significant and persistent disparities in educational attainment, workforce participation, income, and economic opportunity. For many residents, access to higher education remains an essential pathway toward improving quality of life and achieving long-term financial stability.



At the same time, employers across multiple sectors continue to face growing workforce shortages and increasing demand for highly skilled talent. The changing economy demands new approaches to education and workforce development. Today's students must be prepared not only for their first job, but for careers that will continue to evolve throughout their lives. Employers increasingly seek individuals who possess technical expertise, critical thinking skills, adaptability, communication skills, and the ability to navigate a rapidly changing workplace. The traditional divide between education and employment is disappearing. Southwest Tennessee Community College is one of the Mid-South's leading engines for workforce development, university transfer, and economic mobility. Every year, thousands of students and employers rely on Southwest to build the region's talent pipeline and strengthen our communities.

Students and families are asking important questions: Will this credential lead to a good job? Will this degree create economic opportunity? Will this pathway improve my future? These questions require Southwest to think differently about student success. Access remains important. Completion remains important. But neither represents the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is prosperity.

Success must now be measured beyond enrollment and completion.

The true outcome is prosperity, defined as:

- Employment with family-sustaining wages
- Continued education
- Economic mobility

Why Southwest Matters

- 23.1% of Memphis residents live in poverty.
- 72% of adults do not hold a bachelor's degree.
- Tennessee employers continue to face shortages in healthcare, logistics, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, engineering, and information technology.
- Postsecondary credentials dramatically increase lifetime earnings and are among the most effective pathways to economic mobility.

Southwest Tennessee Community College is uniquely positioned to move students from poverty to prosperity by connecting education directly to workforce opportunity.

This requires stronger alignment between **education, workforce needs, and long-term outcomes**. Southwest has both an opportunity and a responsibility to help address these challenges. We must continue expanding access. We must continue improving completion. And we must focus with equal determination on the outcomes that occur after students leave our campuses. This moment calls for a new chapter in the evolution of community colleges. It calls for a renewed focus on economic mobility, workforce success, educational attainment, and community prosperity. It calls for Reform 3.0. The future of Memphis depends upon the success of its people. Helping those individuals achieve success is the work of Southwest Tennessee Community College.

WHY REFORM 3.0?

The Evolution of Community College Success

Community colleges have long served as engines of opportunity, opening doors to higher education and workforce advancement for millions of students. Over time, however, the definition of student success has evolved. As the needs of students, employers, and communities have changed, so too has the role of community colleges. At Southwest Tennessee Community College, our strategic journey reflects three distinct eras of institutional transformation.

Southwest's strategic progression:

- **Reform 1.0 – Access:** Expanding educational entry
- **Reform 2.0 – Completion:** Improving retention and graduation
- **Reform 3.0 – Prosperity:** Ensuring post-graduation success

Reform 3.0 emphasizes career outcomes, transfer success, and long-term economic mobility.

OUR VISION 2026-2031

A Future Defined by Prosperity

Southwest Tennessee Community College envisions a future where every student has access to a clear pathway toward educational attainment, career success, and economic mobility. In this future, students arrive at Southwest with confidence because they understand their options, see the connection between education and opportunity, and receive the support necessary to achieve their goals. At Southwest, prosperity is not simply a financial outcome. Prosperity means meaningful employment. Prosperity means family-sustaining wages. Prosperity means educational attainment. Prosperity means economic mobility. Prosperity means civic engagement.



Prosperity means improved quality of life. The future we seek requires bold thinking, innovative partnerships, and a willingness to evolve. It requires Southwest to organize itself around student outcomes and align every aspect of the institution with a singular purpose: Helping students achieve lives of opportunity, purpose, and prosperity. This vision serves as the foundation for everything that follows.

Strategic Priorities

1. Workforce Success

Focus:

- Program expansion in high-demand fields
- Industry-recognized credentials
- Employer partnerships
- Work-based learning (internships, apprenticeships)

Outcomes:

- Increased employment and earnings
- Strong regional workforce pipelines

2. Transfer Success

Focus:

- University partnerships
- Clear transfer pathways
- Articulation agreements
- Proactive advising

Outcomes:

- Higher transfer and bachelor's completion rates
- Increased long-term earning potential

START. STRIDE. SOAR.

A New Operating Model for Student Success

Pathways to Prosperity is more than a strategic plan. It is a blueprint for transforming how Southwest Tennessee Community College organizes its work on behalf of students. For generations, colleges and universities have been organized around functional divisions and administrative structures. Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Workforce Development, Enrollment Management, and other units have each played important roles in supporting student success. Yet students do not experience the College through organizational charts. They experience Southwest as one institution. When students encounter barriers, they rarely distinguish between divisions. When they achieve success, it is because multiple parts of the institution worked together to support them.

Recognizing this reality, Southwest is embracing a new operating model organized around the student journey. START. STRIDE. SOAR. serves as both a student success framework and an institutional operating model.

This approach reflects a fundamental cultural shift. As management thinker Peter Drucker famously observed, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Strategy alone is not enough. Lasting transformation occurs when culture, structure, and strategy work together. START. STRIDE. SOAR. reflects Southwest's commitment to aligning all three.



START: Core Objective: Entry & Onboarding

Help students start on the right pathway.

Institutional Metrics

Increase enrollment in high-opportunity programs

Key Performance Indicators:

FAFSA completion, Meta-Major declarations, Dual Enrollment conversions

**STRIDE:** Progression & Persistence

Help overcome barriers toward completion.

Institutional Metrics

Increase credentials; employment in high opportunity fields

Key Performance Indicators:

first-year credit completion, course success & advising rates, certificates awarded

**SOAR:** Completion & Prosperity:

Students transition to career, university, sustainable jobs

Institutional Metrics

Increase family-sustaining careers; bachelor's degree in high opportunity programs

Key Performance Indicators:

Job placement rate; living wage attainment

Culture, Measurement, and Accountability

For Southwest, creating a culture of student success means ensuring that every employee understands how their work contributes to helping students achieve their goals. It means embracing a shared responsibility for student success rather than viewing success as the responsibility of a single department or division. It means working collaboratively across traditional boundaries and organizational silos. It means continuously asking a simple but important question: How does this decision improve outcomes for students?

The Culture We Seek to Build

Student-centered decision making • Collaboration across divisions • Innovation and continuous improvement
• Accountability for results • Data-informed planning • Shared responsibility for student success • A strong sense of belonging and community.

Culture of Student Success

The College will shift from siloed operations to • Cross-functional collaboration • Innovation and accountability • Shared responsibility for student outcomes • A strong sense of belonging for students and staff

Measuring What Matters

Pathways to Prosperity is built upon a commitment to continuous improvement, evidence-based decision making, and institutional accountability. Success requires more than good intentions. It requires measurable outcomes that allow the College to assess progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure that resources remain aligned with institutional priorities. As Southwest enters the era of Reform 3.0, the College will focus on measuring outcomes that reflect the full student journey and the long-term impact of higher education. These measures are organized around the **START. STRIDE. SOAR.** framework and reflect the College's commitment to workforce success, transfer success, and economic mobility.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Turning Vision into Action

A strategic plan creates value only when it is translated into action. Pathways to Prosperity serves as the institutional strategic plan for Southwest Tennessee Community College and establishes the priorities, outcomes, and performance measures that will guide the College through 2031. Successful implementation requires more than vision. It requires alignment, accountability, assessment, and continuous improvement. Southwest's governance and planning structures provide the framework through which the College will ensure that this strategic plan remains an active and living document.

Southwest will ensure:

- Integrated planning across all divisions
- Alignment of budget, strategy, and performance
- Ongoing review through governance structures

LOOKING AHEAD: A Future of Opportunity

Southwest Tennessee Community College was founded on a simple but powerful belief: Education changes lives. For more than two decades, the College has served as a gateway to opportunity, helping students pursue their dreams, strengthen their skills, and create brighter futures. That mission continues. But the future demands even more. The future demands that we move beyond access alone. The future demands that we move beyond completion alone. The future demands that we focus intentionally on prosperity.

Pathways to Prosperity reflects Southwest's commitment to helping students not only enter college and complete credentials, but also achieve the outcomes that matter most in their lives: Meaningful employment, Educational attainment, Economic mobility, Personal fulfillment, and Community impact. This strategic plan provides a roadmap for achieving those outcomes. It challenges us to think differently about student success. It challenges us to organize ourselves around the student experience. It challenges us to work across traditional boundaries and embrace a culture of collaboration, innovation, accountability, and continuous improvement. Most importantly, it challenges us to remain focused on the people we serve:

The journey ahead will require focus, discipline, partnership, and perseverance. But it will also create extraordinary opportunities to transform lives and strengthen our region. Together, we will build a future where more students achieve their goals, more families experience economic mobility, more employers find the talent they need, and more communities prosper. Together, we will continue advancing the mission of Southwest Tennessee Community College.

Together, we will help every student:

Start with Purpose. Stride with Confidence. Soar toward Prosperity.

History of Success and Planning

Joins Achieving the Dream (2016) In 2016, Southwest joins ATD to redesign, reinvent and reset the student experience in pursuit of the "big, audacious goal" to transform the student experience and boost enrollment and credential attainment.

PHASE 1

Redesign, Reinvent and Reset Southwest 2016–2018

Southwest debuts ATD findings with a gallery walk of college processes and implements new, student-centered enrollment processes that include an overhaul of admissions and advising processes.

PHASE 2

Governance structure takes shape 2018–2021

College adds Student Success, Institutional Affairs and Planning & Budget Councils to governance structure.

PHASE 3

Focus 2020 Strategic Plan debuts 2020

Southwest leadership and governance councils develop and debut Focus 2020 strategic plan based on ATD findings and outcomes.

PHASE 6

Develop Focus 2031 Strategic Plan

Southwest launches Pathways to Prosperity: Reform 3.0. The strategic plan unites the college's Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Workforce Development into a single, aligned system. Anchored by the Start. Stride. Soar. model, the plan advances student success beyond graduation with a focus on sustainable careers and transfer to 4-year institutions.

PHASE 5

Develops Focus 2025 Strategic Plan

College leaders and governance council representatives develop Focus 2025 strategic plan based on research into what works (and doesn't), process jamborees and the Academic Master Plan.

PHASE 4

What works (and doesn't) comes into focus; Academic Master Plan debuts

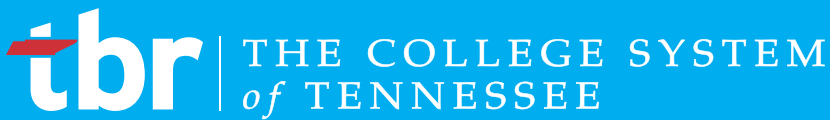
2022
College leaders and their teams assess operations and academic programs to identify successes and opportunities for improvement. Academic Affairs develops Southwest's first-ever academic master plan.

Planning Alignment



Southwest Tennessee Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Southwest Tennessee Community College may be directed in writing to the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).



The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) is Southwest's governing body and the largest system of public higher education in Tennessee, enrolling nearly 153,000 students at its 35 institutions across the state.

Southwest's focus and commitment to student success beyond graduation aligns with TBR guidelines and its 2026–2031 Strategic Plan that focuses on connecting academic pathways to career opportunities, reshaping the student journey for success and maximizing resources through partnerships.

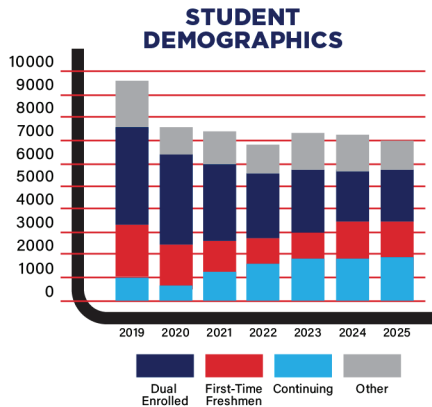
Pathways to Prosperity reflects Southwest's commitment to inclusive engagement across the college and region. More than 300 voices helped shape Reform 3.0. Through 12 listening sessions, planning retreats and surveys, faculty, staff, students, employers, advisory boards, governance councils, community partners, and other stakeholders provided input, including local area Chambers of Commerce. The engagement included five internal sessions where we heard from students and employees. It also included five external sessions. Two additional sessions were facilitated by AGB Consulting. Thus, a broad range of perspectives informed Pathways to Prosperity. Southwest sincerely thanks Dr. Lashonda Massey, Mr. William Gary, Dr. Paul Friga and AGB Consulting, Dr. Monique Perry-Graves and CMEG and Company.

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The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) provides coordination and guidance to TBR and its system institutions. THEC's mission aligns with that of Southwest, focusing on expanding educational access and promoting student success to ensure all individuals have opportunities to pursue high-quality education and earn valuable credentials that support a thriving future.

OUR STUDENTS



AWARDS
Degrees, Diplomas & Certificates
2025-2026
1,381

102 Degrees
44 Certificates
Unique Degrees:
Aviation Operations Technology
Funeral Service Education
Artificial Intelligence
Entertainment Production

20:1
Student to teacher ratio

OUR IMPACT

\$126.6M
in income added to
the local business community.

Partnerships
Amazon, Baptist Memorial Hospital,
FedEx, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare,
MLGW, TVA and more.

844 Local Jobs
Number of faculty,
staff and students employed
at Southwest in 2025

4 Teaching locations
throughout
West Tennessee

OUR RECOGNITION



Reform 3.0 Committee

Terika Hughes, Director of Career Training,
serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives

Embedded Certificates and Navigation into High-Value Careers:

Alfreda Brooks-Davis; Dr. Derrick Wheatley
Robert Biederstadt, Moriah Brown, Dena Enis, Patsy R. Fancher, LaJoyce Harris, Thomas Midgley,
Lynn Russell, Ryan Stenbridge

Meta-Major Onboarding & Career Advising

Jhona Gipson; Bill Turner
LaMetria Banks, Brad Cliff, Shilpa Desai, LaTasha Dorsey, Ernest Greenleaf, Ashley Johnson, Myesha Mutters,
Lake Newton, Phyllis Ridley, Janice Harris-Robinson, Brian Turnbow, Tad Lauritzen Wright,
Brenda Williams, Phoenix Worthy

Dual Enrollment and CTE-Aligned Exposure

Rosie Britton; Shelley Trigg
Ervin Coburn, Lesa Halfacre, Elbonie Halliburton, Johnesha Harris, Ben Hearn, Michael Hunter, Asia King,
Matthew Lexow, Danita Mullings, Jonathan Reyes, Maria Sun, Jireh Walker, Jeremy Wessel

Articulation Agreements and Reverse Transfer Transfer and Articulation Committee - Leads:

LaToya Chavers; Katrina Muldrow
Dr. Verneta Boone, Alvin Coleman III, Venita Dotson, Cynthia Elliot, Joyce Johnson, Dr. Mark Kaplowitz,
Craig Shaun Quinn, Dr. Marjorie Rothschild, Dr. Maysa Safi

Data, Technology, and Evaluation

Erica Hughes; Katina Phillips
Jill da Silva, Dr. Bonnie Grohe, Bimal Kunwor, Lorrean Lim, Raven Matthews, Rosemarie Montgomery,
Dr. Dennis Powers, Chantay Salter, Norma Terry, Jason Whitt

Consultants:

Dr. Paul N. Friga, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and Dr. Monique Perry-
Graves, CMEG and Company.

Southwest Tennessee Community College Executive Team

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LeVetta Hudson, Dr. Michael Boyd, Marla Smith-Brown, Jeanette Smith

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