# Northwest-Shoals Community College

# Strategic Plan

# 2014 to 2018

# Mission Statement

Retreat participants reviewed and discussed the College's mission statement during the planning retreat.  Nothing was identified which would require a change in the College's current mission statement.  The sentence below remains as Northwest-Shoals Community College's mission statement.

Northwest-Shoals Community College provides vocational, technical, academic and lifelong educational opportunities; promotes economic growth; and enhances the quality of life
for the people of Northwest Alabama.

# President's Statement
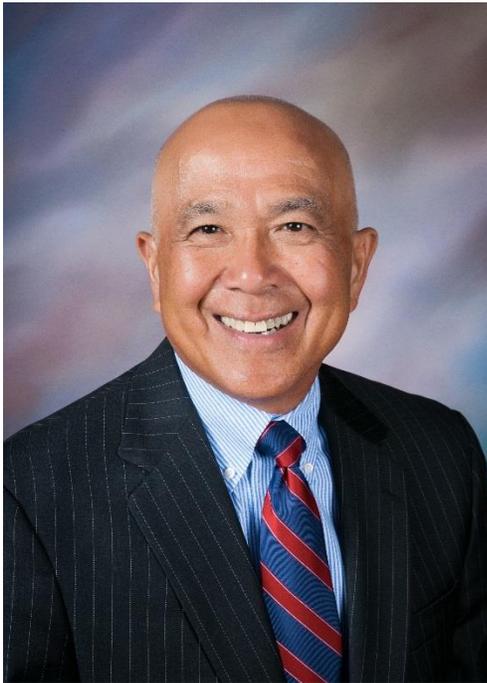


The planning retreat of July 2013 was an essential event for Northwest-Shoals Community College. Through the cooperation of administration, faculty, staff, students, and members of the community, issues affecting the College were identified and discussed. This year's strategic planning initiative followed a different path than previous years. The model for the strategic planning retreat followed the "Innovation Engineering™" program which is defined as a scientific system for growing a culture of never ending innovation that increases innovation speed and decreases risk. Rather than a broad spectrum of strategic initiatives, those who attended the retreat were charged to focus on "wildly important goals" for the college. This broad-based cooperation resulted in the development of two strategic initiatives on which the college will focus its planning strategies during the next two to three years. Once the "wildly important goals" were identified, following the innovative engineering model, teams were established to define and discover as much as possible about the initiatives focusing on key death threats to the idea and identify strategies to overcome the threats or to determine if the initiative is no longer a viable project for the College. As the two projects progress, teams will further develop the initiatives to make it a reality for the college and move it into the normal routine of daily operations. As we engage in implementing these strategic initiatives, I encourage you to think about how you can help accomplish the strategies identified in each of the initiatives.

# Retreat participants represented a broad-based group that included administration, faculty, staff, students, and community members

### President's Council
Humphrey Lee
Glenda Colagross
Ed Carter
Tom Carter
Timmy James
Rose Jones
John McIntosh
Trent Randolph

### Academic Council
Joe Hackworth
Ginger Long
Roger Garner
Tim Kelley
Mark Simpson
Teresa Roberson
Sheila Smith
Desiree South
Rachel Trapp

### Instructors
Heather Johnson
Tim Maupin
Michael McClung
Brian Smith

### Resource/Grant Personnel
April Cookson
Doug Hargett
Crystal Ingle
Tim Inman
Alan Mitchell
Sheila Morris
Lindsey Oliver
Lanetta Phillips
Leslie Tomlinson
Mike Witt

### Community Representatives
Don Blazer – *Flexco*
Steve Holt – *Shoals Chamber of Commerce*
Danny McWilliams – *Colbert County Extension Office*
Jeff Newman – *State Board of Education Member from District 7*
Kathy Underwood –*CRC Realty*
Bud Ward – *Rotary Club*
Forrest Wright – *Shoals Economic Development Authority*

### Students
Ariel Hood – *Student Leader – Phil Campbell*
Rhett Roberson – *Student Leader – Shoals*

A presentation by Mitch Hamm, planning facilitator, provided an overview of the Innovation Engineering™ model and the 4 Disciplines of Execution by Franklin-Covey which were used to guide the strategic planning program

**PRINCIPLES OF INNOVATION ENGINEERING™:**

1. THE BEGINNING OF AN IDEA
    a. Participants were challenged to recognize, articulate, and realize their best ideas for the College and provided the foundation for participants to understand how innovative ideas are generated, articulated, and put into practice.
2. EXPRESSING INNOVATION
    a. Participants learned about how to translate big ideas for the College into words that persuade others to take action.
3. MAKING THE IDEA REAL
    a. Participants learned about tools and methods for developing an idea through evaluation and refinement of strategies by obtaining input from multiple perspectives.  This phase allows the team to identify and challenge death threats to the project.
4. PROJECT INNOVATION
    a. Participants learned about how projects move from early stages of an idea to implementation.
5. ORGANIZATION INNOVATION
    a. Participants learned about the importance of making the new initiative a part of the College's normal routine of daily operations

**4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION BY FRANKLIN-COVEY**

1. FOCUS ON THE WILDLY IMPORTANT
   a. Participants were challenged with the concept to focus on less so that the College can achieve more. The notion is to start by selecting one or two extremely important goals, instead of trying to significantly improve many things all at once. Thus the term, "Wildly Important Goal" (WIG). The concept is designed to make it clear to the College that this is the goal that matters most.  Every WIG must contain a clearly measureable result, as well as the date by which that result must be achieved.
2. ACT ON THE LEAD MEASURES
   a. Participants learned about the difference between lead measures (proactive weekly inputs or activities that directly impact the result) and lag measures (outcomes of success) and the importance to refocus efforts on lead measures.  This discipline proposes that the College act on the activities which create a result - not the result itself.  While both are important, teams often spend more time focusing on lag measures which typically become available too late for timely course correction. The participants were challenged to think in terms of identifying lead activities that will influence each goal and can be frequently measured as prospective indicators. Tracking progress against these lead measures helps teams maintain focus on the right goals and ensure their behaviors are leading to successful achievement of those goals.
3. KEEP A COMPELLING SCOREBOARD
   a. Participants were challenged with creating a scoreboard for the whole team which is designed to engage the team members to win and lets them know here is our current position and here is where we need to be.  A compelling scoreboard should allow anyone to know quickly whether the team is winning or losing. Participants were reminded that to be effective the right things have to be measured.
   5 Characteristics of a Compelling Players' Scoreboard:
      i. Simple
      ii. Visible to the players
      iii. Show the lead and lag measures
      iv. Able to determine immediately if winning or losing
      v. Must be engaging

4. CREATE A CADENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
   a. Participants learned that specific responsibilities for all team members must be established and foster a sense that each team member is accountable to the rest of the team for his or her contributions related to the team's primary goals.  This discipline is fundamental to the model working. It suggests a weekly meeting where each team:
      i. Reports on last week's commitments
      ii. Reviews and updates the scoreboard
      iii. Makes commitment for the next week.

   In other words, the weekly meeting should be brief, positive, and focus on identifying and measuring crucial activities, reporting on them, and fostering a sense of personal and team accountability for them. During these brief weekly reviews, team members will concentrate on understanding the goals, the behaviors that will help them achieve those goals, their progress toward advancing key measures on the scoreboard, and what impactful actions they can perform in the coming week to advance lead measures. The meetings are designed to provide a consistent arrangement for the leader and the team members to review recent successes, analyze challenges, and make timely, specific course correction if necessary.
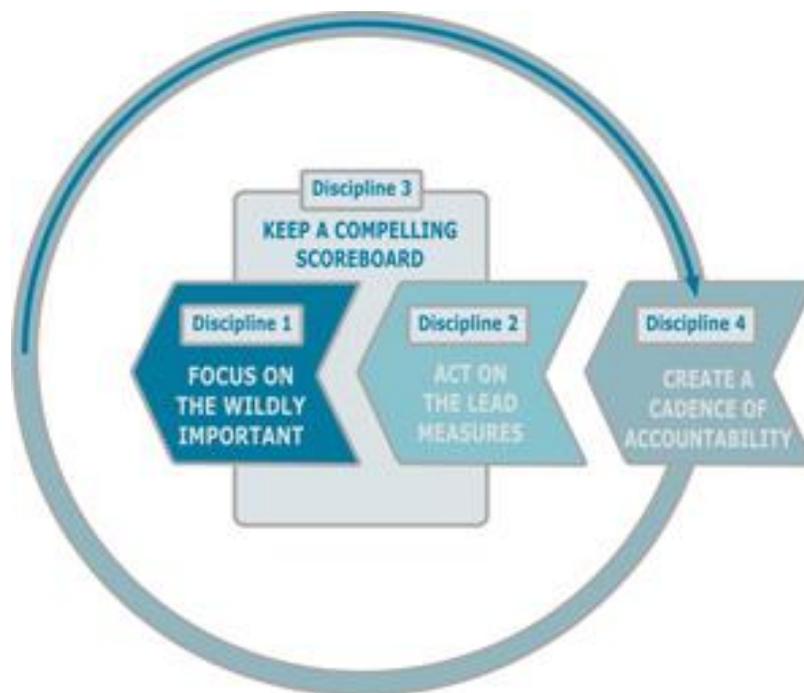
# Thought Starters for the Retreat

## National Statistics

1. By 2018 nearly two-thirds of all American jobs will require a postsecondary certificate or degree
2. Recent studies confirm that nations such as Norway, Sweden, and Canada now outperform the United States in educational attainment and intergenerational economic mobility.
3. The United States now ranks 16th in the world for completion rates for 25-34 year-olds.
4. Fewer than half (46%) of students who enter community colleges with the goal of earning a degree or certificate have attained that goal, transferred to a baccalaureate institution, or still enrolled 6 years later.

## Framework of Institutional Responses Needed to Move Community Colleges Ahead

How does the College move from:

- A focus on student access to a focus on access and success?
- Fragmented course-taking to clear, coherent educational pathways?
- Low rates of student success to high rates of student success?
- Tolerance to achievement gaps to commitment to eradicating achievement gaps?
- Culture of anecdote to a culture of evidence?
- Individual faculty prerogative to collective responsibility for student success?
- A culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration?
- Emphasis on boutique programs to effective education at scale?
- A focus on teaching to a focus on learning?
- Information infrastructure as management support to information infrastructure as learning analytics?
- Funding tied to enrollment to funding tied to enrollment, institutional performance, and student success?

From - *Reclaiming the American Dream: A Report From the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges*, American Association of Community Colleges, 2012.

### DIFFICULT CHOICES FOR CONSIDERATION

- What are the College's priorities?
- How broad should the curriculum be?
- To whom and to what activities will the College say, "No" or "Sorry, but not any longer"?
- How will limited resources be reallocated to bring effective educational practices to scale?
- Are there academic programs or student services that need to be eliminated?

# Retreat participants worked in small groups to complete exercises which focused on identifying important lag indicators for the College

Two primary lag indicators were identified:

1) Retention rates needed to improve
2) Completion rates needed to improve

# Retreat participants worked in small groups to complete exercises which focused on creating ideas to improve identified lag indicators. Idea Cards were used that addressed the following:

- A required innovation name
- A news headline
- An identified customer
- The problem the innovation addressed
- The benefit promise of the innovation
- How the innovation works and proof that the innovation would deliver on its promise
- Identify death threats to the innovative idea
- Why the group was passionate about the project
- Estimate of customer cost including time, energy, and money

BELOW ARE THE INNOVATION NAMES AND THE CORRESPONDING BENEFIT PROMISE THAT GROUPS CREATED (UNEDITED)

| Innovation Name | Benefit Promise |
|---|---|
| Advising Mentor | We will help them meet their goal, even if it's not a degree! |
| Graduation & Completion | If students participate in the student success program, which includes comprehensive academic, financial aid, economic literacy, career advising and support, they will complete their program of study |
| Customer Evaluation | The best way to find out where you want to go is to "measure" where you've been and where you are. We can help you find your way. The best source of advice for your future. |
| Got a future? We can help! | Northwest-Shoals can get you into a satisfying career and lifestyle |
| High Tech Classes for Seniors | Seniors will be able to communicate using modern technology |
| Credit Award Based on Student Competency | NW-SCC awards all college credit based on course competency – not "time in class" |
| BioTech/Agriculture Research Facility | There is not much research being done in Ag in North West AL. I think there is a niche that can be tapped into to satisfy agricultural needs & benefit community |
| Developing Trained Workforce | Tailor make curriculum to satisfy Industry needs (like the partnership of Mercedes & Shelton St.) |
| Meeting Traditional Students' Needs | Provide flexible start/stop dates for courses via podcasts, you tube, moodle, etc. |
| Continuing Education | Helping to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the community. Being responsive to the students' wants or needs. |
| WAC Program | Students will write acceptable papers as part of required work in each area. |
| Career Exploration in Student Success Course | Take 1 day in the class and let students visit a shop to see if it is what they would like to do. |
| Competency Based Learning | Will be able to train at home or on campus. Will be able to skip areas where competency has already been attained. |
| GED Completers Start College Immediately | Would be able to complete student orientation before enrolling in a full semester. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | This would allow for career exploration & mentoring to help with retention |
| Continuing Education for Faculty | Customer Satisfaction – out students will be better served with better teachers who know about us and what we need in our selected career patt. |
| Educating parents about career tech programs | High paying job |
| Career Moms | NW-SCC will make you career ready. |
| Guaranteed to Learn | Guarantee a job "internship" before you graduate we will guarantee an internship in your chosen career field. |
| Measuring Customer Satisfaction | Give them the necessary information about themselves; what their skills might be; what jobs may be available for those skills.  They may not even be aware of their skills or the use of those skills. |
| Fast Track | Allow students to complete just the objectives they need. |
| Get in the Game | NW-SCC will get you involved with your peers.  You will make friendships to last a lifetime! |
| Math by Experience | No scheduling conflicts<br>Real life problems |
| Flexible, Mastery Learning | Mastery-based learning guarantees earned success.  Evening classes offer flexibility and support. |
| GED Flipped Classrooms | GED students will be able to prepare successfully to pass the GED exam in a minimal amount of time by utilizing virtual tools to focus on individualized weaknesses. |
| Non-Credit Educational Opportunities | More people on campus |
| Industrial Training | We will promise employee will be trained to meet your requirements. |
| Weekend Classes | We will offer the classes you need to graduate on the weekends. |
| Flexible Classroom Hours | Will provide childcare if needed. |

# Two strategic themes emerge from the planning retreat

**Student Success**

**Technology**

# Northwest-Shoals Community College Strategic Initiatives 2013-2015

|  | *Title* | *Description* |
|---|---|---|
| SI 1 | Student Success | Northwest-Shoals Community College will provide student support services that address the advising, mentoring, tutoring, registration, career, and other college success needs of its students. |
| SI 2 | Technology | Northwest-Shoals Community College will explore the technology needs to ensure its ability to meet students' current and future needs related to access, materials, communication, and the learning environment. |

**Strategic Initiative 1 – Student Success**

Northwest-Shoals Community College will provide student support services that address the advising, mentoring, tutoring, registration, career, and other college success needs of its students.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chair** | Crystal Ingle |
| **Committee Members** | Tom Carter, Rose Jones, Ginger Long, Tim Maupin, Michael  McClung, John McIntosh, Lanetta Phillips, Mark Simpson, Leslie Tomlinson, Rachel Trapp |

**Strategies to Achieve the Initiative:**

1. Create a Student Success Center on each campus.
2. Hire Student Success Coaches to assist students with skills to improve success and retention.
3. Redesign the Student Success Course.
4. Create and deliver a variety of workshops related to student success issues.

**Success Indicators**
*(Measurable Outcomes)*

1. Completion of Student Success Centers on each campus.
2. A 5% improvement in the fall to fall retention rate by fall 2016.
3. A 5% improvement in the completion rate.
4. Completion of the redesign of the Student Success Course
5. There will be eight student success workshops delivered each academic year.

## Strategic Initiative 2 - Technology

Northwest-Shoals Community College will explore the technology needs to ensure its ability to meet students' current and future needs related to access, materials, communication, and the learning environment.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chair** | Brian Smith |
| **Committee Members** | Glenda Colagross, April Cookson, Joe Hackworth, Ariel Hood, Tim Inman, Timmy James, Heather Johnson, Alan Mitchell, Trent Randolph, Rhett Roberson |

**Strategies to Achieve the Initiative:**

1. Complete an inventory of all technology on both campuses
2. Develop a plan to replace outdated equipment.
3. Develop a plan to create a cycle to replace equipment on a regular basis.
4. Develop an app for the College so that students can put it on their phones for pertinent information related to the College.
5. Update the College's email system for better usage by students, faculty, administration, and staff.
6. Provide adequate software for effective delivery of distance education programs.

**Success Indicators**
*(Measurable Outcomes)*

1. Completion of the technology inventory.
2. Completion of the plan to replace outdated equipment.
3. Completion of the plan to create a cycle to replace equipment on a regular basis.
4. Completion of the College's app for student to use on their mobile devices.
5. Completion of an updated email system.
6. 99% of College communication with students will be via email.
7. At least 90% of faculty and students will rate distance education software as good or very good on yearly surveys.