With the adoption of its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College (LBW) is well-positioned to fulfill its mission of providing high-quality education, training, and cultural enrichment to the citizens of our service area. The plan was developed during a year-long process that included a full environmental scan, a review of the College’s mission and vision statements, the creation of a values statement, and the development of new goals and objectives to strategically guide the College over the next several years.

To ensure broad-based input throughout this process, the Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of faculty, staff, and administrators from all four of the College’s locations, as well as a student representative who provided valuable insight into students’ experiences at LBW. The committee conducted a complete environmental scan during the early stages of planning, gathering input from students, employees, and external partners, including local K-12 leaders, elected officials, Foundation members, and representatives from business and industry.

Planning also included a thoughtful review of the myriad trends and issues currently affecting the landscape of higher education. The plan’s strategic goals—which include program refinement and expansion, updated institutional technology, a renewed focus on student success, stronger marketing and communication, and enhanced partnerships—all grew from information gleaned during the environmental scan and research phase. These new goals have ensured that the College is prepared to better serve the community and meet the rapidly changing needs of our many stakeholders.

One of the most significant parts of the planning process was the development of a values statement affirming our belief in accessibility, community, diversity, excellence, and success. Although these principles are ingrained in LBW’s organizational culture, the values statement further solidifies our commitment and lays the foundation for each strategic goal and objective contained in the final plan.

LBW has a long history of excellence and is ready to build upon that experience as we begin a new chapter. Whether credit or non-credit, academic or technical, traditional or non-traditional, all students stand to benefit from the expertise and dedication of our faculty and staff. We look forward to the transformative opportunities that lie ahead and, with our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan as a roadmap, are better prepared to strengthen our communities and help our students meet their educational goals.

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Phase I: Planning (September 2018)
- Strategic Planning Committee convenes
- Four working teams created to conduct environmental scan

Phase II: Environmental Scan (September-November 2018)
- Student Engagement Team, Employee Engagement Team, and External Engagement Team collect feedback via surveys, focus groups, and meetings from students, employees, and external stakeholders, such as local officials, Foundation Board members, and business and industry partners
- Trends and Issues Team researches important topics in higher education and reviews initiatives directed by the state, the Alabama Community College System, workforce boards, and other external entities
- Working teams share environmental scan research
- Committee identifies topic clusters based on findings

- Committee reviews and approves retaining current mission statement
- Committee reviews and approves retaining current vision statement

Phase IV: Values (January-February 2019)
- Committee drafts working list of College values and solicits College-wide input
- Writing Team drafts values statement based on feedback
- Values statement approved by the Committee and the Executive Council

Phase V: Goals and Objectives (January-March 2019)
- Committee revises topic clusters and develops five strategic goals
- Committee develops and votes on multiple objectives for each strategic goal

Phase VI: Implementation Plan (March-April 2019)
- Five working teams develop strategic goal implementation plans, which include action steps, key personnel involved, and tentative completion dates for all objectives
- Committee reviews and approves each implementation plan

Phase VII: Plan Compilation and Approval (May 2019-February 2020)
- Writing Team compiles draft of strategic plan
- Committee reviews and approves final plan
- Executive Council reviews and approves final plan
- Lurleen B. Wallace Community College 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is implemented
In order to create a feasible plan, the Committee assessed the current state of the College, as well as the educational, economic, and political environment in which it functions.

**SWOT Analysis**
The environmental scan included surveys and focus groups, through which employees, students, and external stakeholders provided feedback on the College’s perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The Employee Engagement Team developed and administered a concise, anonymous survey based on responses from the most recent Employee Evaluation of College and Services. They then held forums on the Andalusia, MacArthur, and Greenville Campuses to share findings and allow for additional discussion. Noting that student feedback was also critical to the development of the Strategic Plan, the Student Engagement Team held focus groups at all locations and created a College-wide student survey, which was completed by approximately 150 students. In addition, the External Engagement Team contacted external stakeholders, including Foundation members, local officials, business and industry representatives, and K-12 partners, to solicit comments and suggestions.

Results showed that a significant percentage of employees agreed that affordability, caring faculty and staff, and a commitment to student success are the top strengths of the College. Students believe LBWCC offers a reasonable amount of student activities and see that as a strength, though many students acknowledged they are not able to attend due to work and other time commitments. Overall, students had positive comments about their experience at LBWCC. Many of the areas they found lacking were not related to the College as an institution, but largely reflect the rural communities in which our campuses are based. When asked about the strengths of LBWCC, external partners highlighted convenient locations, the variety of programs and classes offered, affordability, and community involvement. Furthermore, they overwhelmingly see our faculty and staff as an asset, noting how they care for students and demonstrate a willingness to assist them.

Noting potential threats and areas for improvement, faculty and staff identified funding challenges, negativity and poor morale of some employees, and the College’s ability to keep up with new technologies. Students noted that while LBWCC utilizes several means of communication, including official College email, Savvy Saints in Canvas, and mounted TVs, it needs to better streamline communication and perhaps incentivize students to check their email regularly. They suggested improvements to the current website, as well, to ensure that there are no dead links and that images in the banner have links with more detailed information. Students also indicated that LBWCC should work to make students more aware of the services that are available to them. While indicating their belief that LBW is on par with peer institutions, stakeholders mentioned concerns about financial challenges, limited curriculum, and the difficulty of maintaining aging facilities. And when queried about potential threats to the College, they noted decreasing state funding as well as rapid changes in technology and online classes and programs. A few also mentioned campus security issues, such as additional preparation for an active shooter situation.

There was a broader spectrum of responses when employees were asked to identify opportunities. Nearly half mentioned distance education, followed by increased interaction with the community, new program development, and course scheduling and delivery. Students at all locations indicated that they would like to see more on-campus food options. External stakeholders encouraged LBWCC to pursue various opportunities, including the expansion of technical programs and partnerships with four-year universities for scholarships. They also focused on continuing
education for healthcare, law enforcement, and other professions. Many agreed that the College should continue to build relationships with area chambers of commerce and economic developers. While evaluating external feedback, the Strategic Planning Committee found that some stakeholder perceptions resulted from limited information or awareness about the College’s current activities, so another major opportunity is enhanced communication with the community at large.

**Important Education Trends**
The Trends and Issues Team identified a number of important issues at the national, state, and institutional level that are likely to have a demonstrable impact on LBWCC in the coming years.

**Open Educational Resources:** In an effort to reduce costs for students, many schools are turning to free open educational resources, with some schools offering “zero textbook cost” degrees.

**Free College Movement:** At least 17 states have some form of tuition-free community college, but the programs and results vary dramatically.

**Completion Efforts:** Schools are increasingly being held accountable for student success, to include retention and completion. Complete College Alabama, recently implemented throughout the state, includes an emphasis on “15 to finish,” co-requisites, and adult-friendly scheduling and policies.

**Declining Enrollment:** Postsecondary enrollment has decreased each year since 2010-2011, largely due to low unemployment rates. Additionally, demographic data show that fewer students are in the educational pipeline, so colleges will compete for a smaller share of graduates in the future.

**Postsecondary Funding:** Decreased state support for higher education, paired with enrollment declines, is leading schools to maximize their existing resources, with an increased emphasis on offering high-quality services to students. Institutions are examining ways to reduce waste, including energy improvements that lower utility costs.

**Technology Advancements:** Schools should consider how to effectively adapt technology in ways that will enhance student learning. This may include redesigning or expanding online courses; developing apps; adopting collaborative learning tools; or using adaptive learning technology and augmented or virtual reality in the classroom.

**Outcomes-based Funding:** As of 2017, about 35 states tied higher education funding to metrics (e.g., enrollment, credit hour production, graduation rates); preliminary research findings have shown contradictory results, which largely depend on how the funding models were developed and implemented.

**Soft Skills:** Postsecondary institutions now need to ensure that their students graduate with both the technical and soft skills (e.g., leadership, communication, teamwork, financial literacy) they need to be successful in the workplace.
Data: Data can be used by postsecondary institutions to leverage existing resources, solve problems, and assist with the decision-making process.

Developmental Education Pathways: Many states are redesigning developmental pathways, including co-requisite models, compressed courses, and revised methods of placement assessment (i.e., multiple measures).

Alternative Credentialing: Many schools have implemented stackable credentials, such as short certificates, that facilitate collaboration with business and industry and allow students to work while in school. Other types of credentialing might include industry certifications, badges, credit for prior learning, microcertifications for content mastery, and new degree configurations for transfer students.

Dual Enrollment: The number of dual enrollment students increased by 122% between 2001 and 2015. Schools are working to accommodate the growing interest in dual enrollment while maintaining instructional quality and adequate support networks.

Strategic Enrollment Management: Postsecondary institutions are looking strategically at student enrollment, from recruitment to graduation, to identify bottlenecks and facilitate student success.
Mission and Vision Review

After reviewing the results of the environmental scan and considering the current state of the College, the committee voted to retain the current mission and vision statements.


**Vision Statement:** As a leader in accessible, innovative education and training for a diverse community, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College will be the institution of choice for student success.

Values Statement Development

During a small-group workshop, members of the Committee listed values held by the College and explained their choices. These were shared with and voted on by the entire Committee, then circulated College-wide for faculty and staff feedback. After reviewing survey results, the Writing Team drafted a Values Statement, which was approved by the full committee and the Executive Council.

**Accessibility**
We provide affordable academic, technical, and workforce programs with multiple class formats and flexible scheduling at several locations.

**Community**
We enhance the culture and strengthen the economy in our local communities through civic engagement and strategic partnerships.

**Diversity**
We value the individuality of students and employees and believe that inclusion enriches the educational experience and the college environment.

**Excellence**
We embrace quality by continuously improving instructional programs, administrative processes, and student services.

**Success**
We foster success through support networks that create opportunities for student achievement.
Goal 1) Expand, Develop, and Refine Programs
A. Improve and increase the number of online courses and programs.
B. Strengthen support for online students.
C. Reduce cost of books through use of open educational resources, institutionally provided materials, or other lower-cost alternatives for learning resources.
D. Participate fully in statewide efforts to adopt collaborative online courses or virtual college programs.
E. Determine desirable new programs and the continued viability of existing programs.
F. Maintain high-quality instructional programs.
G. Pursue additional grant funding for new programs.
H. Enhance evening program options.

Goal 2) Update Institutional Technology
A. Ensure successful transition to new system wide ERP.
B. Explore opportunities for augmented and virtual reality.
C. Enhance College wide technology.
D. Evaluate traditional computer labs and determine if the current usage is optimal or if there are better technological solutions.
E. Examine opportunity to create technology-lending program.
F. Utilize technology to gain efficiencies in scheduling and facilities usage.

Goal 3) Promote Student Success
A. Increase retention and completion rates.
B. Expand tutoring and assessment opportunities.
C. Develop and implement a strategic enrollment plan.
D. Develop career and transfer center through collaborative efforts.
E. Address food insecurity issues with students.
F. Develop community partnerships for civic engagement.

Goal 4) Strengthen Marketing and Communication
A. Improve public awareness of our night and online course offerings.
B. Streamline communication with students.
C. Establish specific groups of stakeholders for targeted internal and external communication.
D. Develop student-centered communication procedures.
E. Pursue search engine optimization.
F. Increase social media presence through students.
G. Streamline timely LBWCC website updates.
H. Increase efforts to bring community members to LBWCC sites.
I. Educate the community of dual enrollment opportunities.

Goal 5) Enhance Partnerships
A. Collaborate with public and private K-12 faculty and administrators to ensure that students are prepared for college coursework.
B. Partner with transfer institutions to prepare LBWCC students for success in four-year programs.
C. Strengthen and expand economic and workforce development initiatives.
D. Expand outreach opportunities to younger generations.
E. Continue strong partnerships with the College Foundations.