
ACADEMIC PLAN 2021-2024

Academic Affairs

Thank you to the following contributors:

Keith Barnes, Vice President of Equity and Inclusion; Chief Diversity Officer

Dr. Kym Blanchard, Executive Director, Online Development & Innovation

Gina Caronna, Associate Vice President, STEM

Trustee Gloria Cudia

Dr. Lisa Mehlig, Executive Director, Online Assessment & HLC Liaison

Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs

Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President, Liberal Arts & Adult Education

Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Communication

Table of Contents

Background and Context.....	4
Rock Valley College Mission, Vision and Values	7
Rock Valley College’s Strategic Planning Tenets.....	8
Rock Valley College Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO).....	9
Rock Valley College Academic Plan—2021-2024.....	10
Goal One: Increase access to post-secondary education and training.....	10
Goal Two: Develop programs and pathways that respond to community and regional needs.	13
Goal Three: Ensure a quality learning environment that increases the rates of attainment and completion.	14
Goal Four: Utilize technology to advance and support teaching and learning.	19
Addendum: Adult Education Plan.....	22

Background and Context

Rock Valley College (RVC) was established in 1964. The College's district includes Winnebago and Boone counties as well as parts of Stephenson, Ogle, McHenry, and DeKalb counties. Academic Affairs offerings include 27 Associate degree programs, nearly 60 course areas that can lead to baccalaureate degrees, and 67 certificate programs and four apprenticeship programs that provide specialized training in a specific area.

Recognized by the Department of Education, the **Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC)** is one of six regional accrediting organizations in the United States that accredits higher education institutions in the nineteen-state North Central region. In order to maintain continued accreditation with HLC, RVC must demonstrate that it is continuing to fulfill the Commission's five criteria for accreditation. (www.hlcommission.org)

The **Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)** is the coordinating board for Illinois' system of higher education. One function of the IBHE is approving new academic programs and periodically reviewing existing programs "to advise the appropriate governing board whether such programs continue to be educationally and economically justified." In the context of such reviews, "proposals for new programs and reviews of existing programs for public community colleges and public universities are analyzed in the context of the institution's mission, focus, and priorities." (<https://www.ibhe.org/HigherEdOrgChart.html>)

The **Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)** was established in 1965 by the Illinois General Assembly to create a system of public community colleges that would be within easy reach of every resident. More than 50 years later, the Illinois Community College System covers the entire state with 48 colleges and one multi-community college center in 39 community college districts. Community colleges serve nearly one million Illinois residents each year in credit and noncredit courses and many more through their public service programs.

Community colleges are similar to each other and yet each college is unique. While this may appear to be a contradiction, it is not. Illinois community colleges share a common mission. They prepare people for college, for transfer to other colleges or universities, and for good paying jobs that demand high skills. Community colleges also provide adult literacy and continuing education and services. What makes each college unique is how the college responds to the communities it serves.

The Illinois Community College System is coordinated by the Illinois Community College Board comprised of citizens appointed by the Governor. Locally elected boards of trustees set policies that guide their colleges in achieving local and statewide goals. Within the System, organized groups represent students, faculty, trustees, staff, administrators, and college presidents, and all of these groups are actively involved in the decision-making process for the System. Colleges meet both local and statewide needs for education and workforce development through high-quality, affordable, accessible, and cost-effective programs and services.

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Mission Statement:

- To administer the Public Community College Act in a manner that maximizes the ability of the community colleges to serve their communities.
- To promote cooperation within the system and accommodate those state of Illinois initiatives that are appropriate for community colleges.
- To be accountable to the students, employers, lawmakers, and taxpayers of Illinois.
- To provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities for the individuals and communities they serve.

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Goals:

The Illinois Community College Board hereby affirms the mission of the state's 48 community colleges to provide all Illinois residents with opportunities for economic and personal growth, civic engagement, and cultural awareness through a commitment to the following three goals.

- **Goal 1:** Support minority, first generation, and low-income students across urban, rural, and suburban communities, through the promotion of evidence-based best practices that results in system wide improvement of equity metrics that reduce equity gaps.
- **Goal 2:** Support a seamless transition for students into and through postsecondary education and the workforce by fostering system engagement and equitable access and outcomes for these students.
- **Goal 3:** Contribute to economic development by supporting the Illinois community college system's effort to provide robust workforce training, to expand apprenticeships, to increase credential attainment, to build quality career pathways, and to address the future needs of the Illinois workforce.

The Board will implement its goals with a focus and commitment to equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students. The Board will promote best practices, enable evidence-based decision-making, and support system-wide continuous improvement.

Alignment with Education and Workforce Initiatives

- Complete College America Co-Requisite to Scale Project Transitional Math Pathways Project
- Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth
- IL Workforce Education Strategic Plan
- IL Adult Education Strategic Plan
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act – IL Unified Plan
- IL Postsecondary Report Card (<http://www.iccb.org/>)

RVC is thus held accountable to the federal Department of Education, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), as well as to district stakeholders.

Rock Valley College Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement

Rock Valley College empowers students and community through lifelong learning.

Vision Statement

Rock Valley College empowers the community to grow as a society of learners through well-designed educational pathways, leading to further education, rewarding careers, cultural enrichment, and economic-technological development.

Core Values

Learner-centered Community. Rock Valley College is dedicated to providing affordable lifelong learning opportunities that foster student success.

Mutual Respect. At all times, Rock Valley College upholds the dignity of each individual by being ethical, respectful, fair, and courteous in communications and actions.

Excellence. Rock Valley College maintains high expectations for teaching and learning and holds itself accountable for promoting continuous improvement.

Diversity. Rock Valley College promotes, celebrates, and embraces differences, including cultural and ethnic diversity and diversity of thought.

Collaboration. Rock Valley College fosters innovative, enriching partnerships within the college community and among others that serve the region.

Innovation. Rock Valley College is a forward-thinking institution that explores creative approaches for the future.

Public Trust. Rock Valley College honors and upholds its commitment to the community through integrity of actions and efficient use of resources.

Rock Valley College's Strategic Planning Tenets

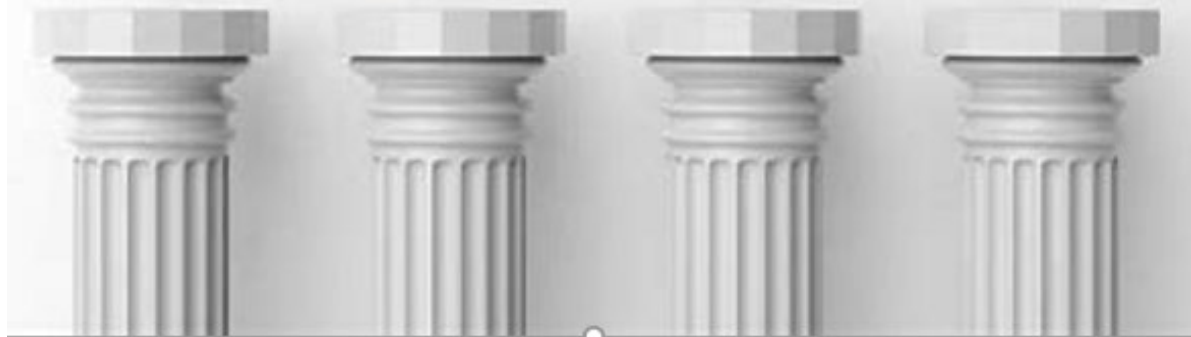
Rock Valley College empowers students and community through lifelong learning.

Access

Exceptional
Educational
Opportunities

Exceptional
Training
Opportunities

Diversity,
Equity, and
Inclusion



Rock Valley College Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO)

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) describe what a student should know or be able to do upon completion of their college experience. As such, learning outcomes at the institutional level are general enough to apply to all students regardless of credential earned and program or discipline studied.

The [RVC ISLO](#) are representative of the national expectations of associate's degree completers described within the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile.

Analytic Reasoning	Students will form logical inferences, judgments, or conclusions from facts or premises related to topics encountered in the classroom, workplace, and daily life.
Communication	Students will exchange ideas effectively in a variety of settings.
Global Awareness & Responsibility	Students will develop the knowledge and skills required to responsibly interact with social and natural communities, both locally and globally.
Personal Responsibility	Students will accept responsibility for their personal and professional wellness and development, positioning themselves for life-long learning.

Rock Valley College Academic Plan—2021-2024

Goal One: Increase access to post-secondary education and training.

Pillar Alignment: 1: Access
4: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Initiative 1.1: Enhance bridges to higher education and careers for district residents who are currently underserved or underrepresented.

Strategy 1.1.1: The College will seek additional partnerships with area high schools to prepare and recruit traditional-age students.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
1.1.1.1. Expand summer bridge offerings to include new bridge programs and specific initiatives to attract students from diverse racial, gender, and socioeconomic populations	2 new programs in Summer 2022 2 new programs in Summer 2023 2 new programs in Summer 2024	Early College Department Academic Deans	Rosters from Summer Bridge Programs <i>Dean, Early College</i>
1.1.1.2. Increase number of high schools offering full pathways	All high schools in district offering at least 1 full pathway by 2024	Early College Department Academic Affairs	Spreadsheets <i>Dean, Early College</i>

Strategy 1.1.2: The College will seek ways to make higher education more affordable.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
1.1.2.1. Create and distribute parameters for usage of OER.	1 OER for each division in 2022. 1 OER for each department in 2023	Academic Deans CITI	Meeting Notes Parameters List of OER utilized Contract <i>Exec. Director, CITI AVP, LAAE</i>
1.1.2.2. Participate in contract review for bookstore vendor.	FY2023		

1.1.2.3. Seek additional grant opportunities to offset student costs.	Ongoing 2021-2024	Academic Affairs in conjunction with IR	Spreadsheet <i>VP, IEC</i>
1.1.2.4. Promote current scholarship opportunities with students, including diverse students who apply for and receive scholarship funds.	Ongoing 2021-2024	Academic Affairs and RVC Foundation	Database <i>Foundation</i>
1.1.2.5. Develop 5 new scholarship opportunities with area businesses.	Ongoing 2021-2024	Academic Affairs and RVC Foundation	Database <i>Foundation</i>

Strategy 1.1.3: The College will revise placement strategies and limited admissions program requirements to match national best practices and ensure equity.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
1.1.3.1. Review placement strategies to include multiple measures.	October 2021	Academic and Student Affairs	Baseline Data <i>AVP</i>
1.1.3.2. Increase academic supports for students in entry level college courses.	Fall 2023	Academic and Student Affairs	CRM-Case management advising model <i>VP, SA</i>
1.1.3.3. Implement placement strategies to include self-placement and other best practices.	Fall 2024	Academic and Student Affairs	College Catalog/ Website <i>AVP</i>

Initiative 1.2.: Enhance and improve students' access to higher education and career training through alternative and varied delivery methods and locations.

Strategy: 1.2.1. The College will develop course schedules and offer courses at times and locations that serve identified needs.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
1.2.1.1. Implement the fully online AA.	2022	Academic & Student Affairs	Published Schedule Recruitment Materials Rosters <i>VP, SA</i>

1.2.1.2. Expand offerings at Downtown and other satellite campuses.	2024	Academic Affairs	Published Schedule AVP
1.2.1.3. Provide school-age tutoring for children of adults attending evening class.	2024	Academic Affairs	Attendance Records VP

Goal Two: Develop programs and pathways that respond to community and regional needs.

Pillar Alignment: 1: Access
2: Exceptional Education
4: Diversity

Initiative 2.1: Enhance pathways linking to higher education and careers for district residents who are currently underserved or underrepresented.

Strategy 2.1.1: The College will increase pathways for high school students and adults in Career & Technical and transfer programs.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
2.1.1.1. Expand pathways offerings to include new pathways	5 new pathway partnerships to be offered starting in Fall 2022 5 additional pathway partnerships in Fall 2023 3 additional pathway partnerships in Fall 2024	Early College Department	Spreadsheet Dean Early College
2.1.1.2. Expand CTE Mechatronics pathway at ATC.	1 cohort participating in 2022 2 schools participating in 2022 1 additional cohort in 2023 2 additional schools in 2023 1 additional cohort in 2024 2 additional schools in 2024	Academic Affairs Early College Department	Spreadsheet Mechatronics Coordinator
2.1.1.3. Increase ICAPS pathways.	3 new ICAPS pathways in 2022 3 new ICAPS pathways in 2023	Adult Education staff	DAISI Colleague Rosters Transitions Coordinator
2.1.1.4. Increase Credit for Prior Learning opportunities.	2 new CPL opportunities in 2022 3 new CPL opportunities in 2023 4 new CPL opportunities in 2024	Instructional Support Services Academic Deans	Spreadsheet of Approved Crosswalks Dean ISS
2.1.1.5. Establish additional work-based learning opportunities, including Human Services.	2024	Academic Deans Student Affairs	Internship records
2.1.1.6. Establish an Early Childhood Education Learning Lab to allow for work-based learning.	2024	Academic Deans	Internship Records

Goal Three: Ensure a quality learning environment that increases the rates of attainment and completion.

Pillar Alignment: 2: Exceptional Education

Initiative 3.1: Enhance and improve students’ academic achievements through ongoing assessment and evaluation of courses and programs.

Strategy 3.1.1: The College will strengthen the quality of teaching and learning through assessment of curriculum and instruction.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
3.1.1.1. Identify the importance of assessment and their role in that process to improve student learning (10% increase as measured by the culture survey).	FY23, Spring 2023	VPs, Exec. Directive, Outcomes Assessment/HLC Deans,	Culture survey
3.1.1.2. Apply (75%) assessment data and findings to develop action plans for the improvement of student learning.	FY24, Spring 2024	VPs, Exec. Directive, Outcomes Assessment/HLC Deans, Faculty	Planning & Self-study
3.1.1.3. Monitor (75%) implementation of action plans to determine impact on improving student learning.	FY24, Spring 2024	VPs, Exec. Directive, Outcomes Assessment/HLC Deans, Faculty	Planning & Self-study Survey Dean

Strategy 3.1.2. The College will evaluate the effectiveness of programs and courses.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	
3.1.1.1. Annual progress will be reviewed of action items resulting from Program Review including efforts to close racial, gender and	FY22, Spring 2022	VPs, Deans	Annual Documentation AVP

socioeconomic equity gaps.			
3.1.2.1. Survey advisory boards, community employers regarding success of completers.	FY22, Spring 2022	VPs, Deans, VP SA, VP IE	Surveys AVP
3.1.2.2. Identify success of students transferring to universities.	FY22, Spring 2022	VP IE	Clearing House Reports from Transfer Universities VP, IE
3.1.2.3. Survey students post-completion, assessing satisfaction and effectiveness of programs.	FY23, Spring 2023	VPs, Deans, VP SA, VP IE	Surveys AVP
3.1.2.4. Implement strategies to reduce racial, gender, and socioeconomic equity gaps in program completion rates.	FY24	VPs, Deans, VP IE	Completion Reports, Disaggregated Data VP, IE
3.1.2.5. Implement strategies to increase success rates of non-traditional adults.	FY24	VP	Completion Reports VP, IE

Initiative 3.2: Develop and implement quality assurance procedures to support effective teaching practices.

Strategy 3.2.1: The College will design and implement a plan to review Course Completion data.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	
3.2.1.1. Analyze Course Completion data at the section level.	FY22, Spring 2022	AVPs, Deans, Faculty, VP IE	Course Completion Data Meeting notes AVPs
3.2.1.2. Design professional development opportunities to address gaps identified in instruction.	FY23, Fall 2022	AVPs, Deans, CITI	Canvas courses/ F2F Workshops Exec. Dir, CITI
3.2.1.3. Implement interventions for courses and/or sections with lower than 70%	FY23, Spring 2023	AVPs, Deans, Faculty	Documentation of Intervention

Course Completion rates.			Course Completion reports post intervention AVPs
3.2.1.4. Reduce racial, gender, and socioeconomic equity gaps in course completion rates.	FY24	AVPs, Deans, Faculty	Disaggregated Course Completion Reports IR

Initiative 3.3: Provide comprehensive academic support.

Strategy 3.3.1: The College will create more comprehensive strategies to support and retain diverse populations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, and worldviews).

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	
3.3.1.1. Determine the unique needs of underserved populations, i.e., students needing basic skills, low income, first generation, etc.	FY22, Spring 2022	AVPs, Deans, Faculty, VP IE, VP EI	Plans to Support Special Populations Perkins Coordinator
3.3.1.2. Design professional development opportunities to address gaps identified in instruction.	FY23, Spring 2023	AVPs, Deans, CITI	Canvas courses/ F2F Workshops Exec. Dir, CITI
3.3.1.3. Design and implement one intervention for each special population.	FY24, Spring 2024	AVPs, Deans, Faculty	Plan of Intervention AVP

Initiative 3.4: Create opportunities to increase equity and inclusion in academic programs.

Strategy 3.4.1: Increase the academic success of diverse populations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression sexual orientation, disability status, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, and worldviews).

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
3.4.1.1. Increase culturally responsive content in assignments, activities and readings that reflects a more diverse population (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression sexual orientation, disability status, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, and worldviews).	FY24	VP, EI	Instructor Syllabi Deans
3.4.1.2. Increase race, ethnicity and gender equity in STEM studies by 5%.	FY24	AVPs VP, SA	Enrollment KPIs IR
3.4.1.3. Increase race, ethnicity and gender equity in limited admission programs by 5%.	FY24	AVPs VP, SA	Enrollment KPIs IR

Strategy 3.4.2: Increase the level of employee cultural competence of diverse populations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression sexual orientation, disability status, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, and worldviews).

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
3.4.2.1. Faculty (5) will be trained in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and High Impact Practices best practices.	FY23	Faculty	Completion Credentials VP, E&I
3.4.2.2. Provide professional development on ways to analyze disaggregated data in terms of student success, learn about people from diverse populations, facilitate difficult conversations, and how to identify and address implicit bias and stereotype threats.	FY23	AVPs VP, IR CITI	Course Shells CITI PAIC And Office of DEI Training Workshop and Discussion Evaluations
3.4.2.3. Increase faculty/student engagement outside of the classroom with	FY24	Faculty	Self-reporting Attendance Records to events

students of diverse populations.			
3.4.2.4 - Recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty and adjunct instructors to create a workforce that is more reflective of the diversity of the student population and communities within the district.	FY24	VP, LAEE VP, IP HR	HR documents

Goal Four: Utilize technology to advance and support teaching and learning.

Pillar Alignment: 1. Access
2. Exceptional Educational Opportunities
3. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Initiative 4.1: Increase the quality of online courses.

Strategy 4.1.1: Implement recognized standards in hybrid and online course development.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection
4.1.1.1. Evaluate the quality of online course using a predetermined rubric.	FY22 and ongoing	CITI department	Rubrics collected and stored in shared drive CITI
4.1.1.2. Increase percentage of faculty who have completed training in industry standards through Quality Matters by 35%.	FY22 and ongoing	CITI department	QM CITI
4.1.1.3. 100% of faculty who teach online will have their courses reviewed internally.	FY22	CITI	Rubrics collected and stored in shared drive CITI
4.1.1.4. Have a minimum of one course reviewed and approved by Quality Matters Full Review.	FY23	CITI	QM CITI
4.1.1.5. Have a minimum of five courses reviewed for Quality Matters Essential Standards Badge.	FY23	CITI	QM CITI
4.1.1.6. Evaluate online courses for accessibility preparedness.	FY22 and ongoing	Disability Services, CITI	CITI

Strategy 4.1.2. Increase student success in online courses.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
4.1.2.1. Faculty response to students will be clearly communicated.	FY22, Spring 2022	AVP, Dean	Syllabi Audit Deans
4.1.2.2. Increase the amount of active learning included in online courses by 10%.	FY23	CITI	LMS Rubric CITI
4.1.2.3. Align all course materials, activities and assessments to the course outcomes.	FY24	CITI, AVP, Deans	LMS Assessment Rubrics Planning & Self-Study AVPs CITI
4.1.2.4. Feedback from faculty to students will be measurable, timely and constructive.	FY22	AVPs, CITI	LMS CITI
4.1.2.5. Ensure access to necessary technology equitably.	FY22	CITI	Laptop/Hotspot Rental records CITI
4.1.2.6. Ensure appropriate student orientations to utilizing technology.	FY23	CITI VP, SA	Course shells CITI
4.1.2.7. Reduce racial, socioeconomic, and gender student equity gaps in online courses and programs.	FY22	CITI, VP	Online Student Success Data

Initiative 4.2: Increase the use of technology in face-to-face classes.

Strategy 4.2.1. Diversify the instructional strategies used to include educational technology.

Action Steps:	Timeline for Completion:	Responsible Parties:	Data Collection:
4.2.1.1. Provide professional development on the use of educational technology.	FY23	CITI	CITI course offerings CITI
4.2.1.2. Pilot educational technology	FY24	CITI eLearning Committee	Pilot Findings CITI

strategies with 5 faculty members.			
4.2.1.3. Increase use of technological tools for faculty to borrow.	FY24	CITI	Check-out Log Use of Media Lab Spaces CITI
4.2.1.4. Evaluate online courses for accessibility preparedness.			

Addendum: Adult Education Plan

The Rockford region has a great need for increased educational attainment. Just 55.7 percent of adults in Winnebago County have completed any level of higher education (Town Charts, 2020).

It is essential to increase the educational attainment, as the absence of education has very strong financial consequences. In 2017, the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that workers with a high school diploma earned upwards of \$400 less per week than workers with a bachelor's degree (Dowd, 2018). Those with lower education often have fewer resources to buffer stress, weaker social and psychological skills, and less-developed social networks. These together lessen their ability to respond to life's challenges.

Tutoring

A Tutoring Program will be designed and implemented to provide additional supports to children of adults enrolled in either adult education or credit coursework at the College. Tutoring will be scheduled to be available during the class times, in order to enable students to bring their children with them to the College, fostering a whole-family emphasis on learning.

The Tutoring Room will have a coordinator, who will oversee the student workers who will provide tutoring services. Ideally, students from the Education program will provide the tutoring. While this will not replace a practicum, this opportunity will still be an opportunity to engage in work-based learning which will enhance their education.

Early Childhood Education Learning Lab

Childcare is a great need for adults who are working to increase their educational attainment, whether they are currently in adult education classes or pursuing a certificate or degree. Without adequate childcare, student-parents are not able to complete a credential. In fact, less than one-third of student-parents complete any credential (Long, 2017). In addition to creating a challenge for attendance, a lack of childcare also prevents student-parents from accessing student support services, which impedes their academic success.

An RVC Early Childhood Education Lab located in a central location would provide a feasible, quality solution for student-parents. It also would offer additional opportunities for on-campus, onsite placements for RVC students. RVC would maintain control over the curriculum being taught, and tracking of completion of placement hours would be streamlined. This would also afford opportunities for greater work-based learning experiences for students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program and would greatly enhance the program.

Human Services Program

The Human Services Program will be re-established in order to provide educational services needed to support the community's need for additional training in mental health. Redesigned certificates and a degree will be in accordance with the Council of Social Work Education, and will be offered fully-online. Work-based learning will be offered through partnerships with the many agencies in our community.