



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 – 2023



## President's Message

Ridgewater College provides quality liberal arts, technical, customized training and continuing education opportunities for diverse student learners in an inclusive and supportive environment. More than 4,200 students are served on two campuses and through online learning offerings; in addition, continuing education and training is provided to approximately 10,000 community members.

Our initial planning process in Spring 2019 included extensive dialogue between our strategic planning consultants and the college's administration, faculty, staff, students and community stakeholders that produced a wealth of information about what we are already doing well, what could be improved, and what we must do that is new and different to strengthen the college. The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan developed through that collective effort identified five strategic initiatives for the College – while we have made great progress on those initiatives, they continue to be the primary focus for the College going forward.

As a result, we are shifting our strategic planning work to an annual process of review and modification of our Strategic Plan, building on past work and success and introducing new goals and initiatives each year to keep the plan current and future-oriented. This approach will help us address new challenges and make the most of new opportunities while embracing one of the greatest strengths of Ridgewater – the shared passion about how much our College means to our students, faculty and staff and the people and communities we serve!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Craig Johnson

President, Ridgewater College

# Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

## Vision

Ridgewater College will be a dynamic educational leader exemplifying innovation and excellence within a student-centered learning environment.

## Mission

Ridgewater College empowers diverse learners to enrich their lives and reach their full potential through personalized and relevant learning experiences in an accessible, supportive, and inclusive environment.

## Guiding Principles

- *Enterprising* - We are future-focused and change-oriented, developing creative solutions to challenges that maximize our institutional, system and local resources.
- *Empowerment* – We develop and empower employees to make decisions to best serve students and stakeholders.
- *Excellence* – We strive to exceed expectations in all that we do.
- *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* – We seek to understand and appreciate the needs and experiences of every individual and actively work to provide genuine opportunities for everyone to succeed and participate in college activities and processes.
- *Trust and Respect* – We are committed to developing a culture based in processes and behavior that create trust and respect among all stakeholders.
- *Collaboration* – We connect and work together to achieve common goals while respecting needs and interests of stakeholders.
- *Curiosity and Creativity* – We constantly strive to understand, learn, change, and improve.
- *Accountability* – As individuals and groups, we willingly accept and take ownership of our successes and failures.

## Equity Commitment

Ridgewater College is committed to providing welcoming and inclusive campuses that value and respect the unique experiences, needs and contributions of individuals and groups from every background and identity to ensure that each student, employee and community member has a genuine opportunity for participation and success.

## Strategic Initiatives

The initial planning process in Spring 2019 provided clarity on what must be done to strengthen the College and resulted in the development of five key initiative areas. While we clearly need to develop activities that will impact enrollment and revenue, our initial planning effort recognized the need to improve engagement with employees and the community and emphasized the critical impact that increased engagement will have on the other strategic initiatives. Increased engagement is expected to act as a positive multiplier and a critical driver of our success, with **financial stability** as the primary outcome for the plan.

We believe that achieving our five Strategic Initiatives will enable us to develop and sustain a learning environment that:

- Focuses first and foremost on student needs and student success
- Equips students to think critically and creatively, solve problems, and adapt to a rapidly changing world
- Embraces diversity of thought, identity and background and affirms the worth and dignity of each individual
- Focuses on continuous improvement by establishing success indicators, measuring against those indicators, and using the results to make strategic decisions
- Promotes ethical and honest behavior and accountability at institutional and individual levels
- Demonstrates and reinforces the value of lifelong learning
- Reaches beyond the College's walls to the community, the region, and the world

## Strategic Initiatives

Our Strategic Plan will continue to focus on the five initiatives identified in Spring 2019:

### 1. Expand and Enhance Engagement

- We will increase engagement within the College and with external community stakeholders.
- We will communicate and collaborate more thoroughly and purposefully at all levels and in a variety of ways to increase awareness, understanding, and dialogue that will inform and guide our decisions.
- We will provide increased transparency and clarity, create more proactive and ongoing dialogue and feedback processes, and develop stronger partnerships and working relationships inside and outside of the College.

#### Priority Actions:

- We will communicate with transparency and clarity.
- We will proactively and regularly seek feedback from students, employees, and the community.
- We will develop creative community partnerships and relationships.

### 2. Challenge the Status Quo

- We will actively and collaboratively seek to find ways to reinvent “what we do and how we do it” to transform our processes, programs, organizational structure and physical

spaces to better respond to changing needs, demands, conditions and interests in our College, in the communities we serve, within the Minnesota State system, and in the overall social context of higher education and the workplace.

- We will improve and streamline our processes to make decisions faster and empower the College community.
- We will redesign the delivery of programs and services to meet the expectations and needs of students and employers.
- We will explore ways to reconfigure and use our existing facilities and resources to support college initiatives and create a more attractive physical environment for the 21st Century student.

**Priority Actions:**

- We will expand involvement, make decisions faster, and develop and empower team leaders to make decisions that impact their teams.
- We will evolve our programming and services to reflect the changing needs of students, employers, and the marketplace.
- We will upgrade and update campus facilities.

**3. Champion Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

- We will fully commit to providing a genuine opportunity for success for every individual regardless of his or her starting point, challenges, abilities and personal means and resources.
- We will accept and own the challenge of eliminating opportunity, achievement, and employment gaps that currently exist in our communities by identifying barriers and needs for our students and developing effective solutions to position every student for success.
- We will increase the diversity of our faculty, staff, and administration to reflect the communities we serve.
- We will strive to act as a primary change agent in the lives of every person in our service area, with specific emphasis on individuals from the lower socioeconomic ranks of our communities.

**Priority Actions:**

- We will fully encourage, value and celebrate diversity of background, experience, and thought.
- We will develop resources and processes to collect and analyze data to inform our work toward eliminating the achievement, opportunity and employment gaps.
- We will embrace inclusion in all activities because diverse thinking creates better results.

**4. Strengthen and Promote the Ridgewater Student Experience**

- We will identify and maximize the strengths of our offerings, services, and resources that have the potential to stand out among other higher education options in the regional marketplace.
- We will genuinely adhere to a “Students First!” commitment and develop and nurture a culture that recognizes and values every member of the College as a contributor to student success.
- We will focus on student needs and expectations to improve the overall student experience and strive to go beyond meeting student needs and expectations.
- We will develop a campus climate and culture based on respect, empowerment, and appreciation of our students, faculty and staff.

### Priority Actions:

- We will apply a “Students first!” lens to all discussions, actions and decisions.
- We will strive to go beyond what is expected of us from our students and stakeholders.
- We will value our faculty and staff as central elements of an amazing student experience.

## 5. Achieve Financial Sustainability

- Through progress on our strategic initiatives, we will demonstrate the value of the Ridgewater College student experience and increase and/or stabilize enrollment while creating operational efficiencies that will improve the financial bottom line in our College.
- We will achieve a balance between revenue and expenses that will eliminate an annual budget deficit and establish funding for new initiatives and growth of College offerings and services to better serve our stakeholders.

### Priority Actions:

- We will achieve a balance between revenue and expenses that will significantly reduce our current annual budget deficit.
- We will manage the finances of the college to ensure current and future viability.
- We will find ways to effectively and clearly communicate the State of the College to stakeholders.
- We will encourage every member of the college to take responsibility for the enrollment and financial condition of the College.

In the first three years of implementing this Strategic Plan, we succeeded in establishing a foundation to support the first three initiatives as ongoing priorities across the College. In 2022-23, we will add a fourth new focus on ***developing the Ridgewater student experience*** as a key driver of our institutional growth and success.

## Ridgewater College

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a member of Minnesota State