



ROCKY
MOUNTAIN
COLLEGE

The Rocky Mountain College Outcome:
Creating Futures and Transforming Lives
(draft 9/4/19)

A Strategic Vision for 2028

Rocky Mountain College in 2019

The mission of Rocky Mountain College to “*educate future leaders through liberal arts and professional programs that cultivate critical thinking, creative expression, ethical decision-making, informed citizenship, and professional excellence*” continues to serve as the foundation for our planning. Throughout our planning implementations of the last several years, our focus has been the achievement of the mission and our attendant core themes of Academic Excellence, Transformational Learning, and Shared Responsibility and Stewardship. Recent discussions and survey results indicate that stakeholders--faculty, staff, trustees, students, members of the community--continue to recognize the College’s focus on our core themes and to value the College as an integrated community committed to integrity and service. Achieving meaningful continuous improvement respective of these core themes and values is the process by which Rocky Mountain College executes its mission.

Our College will celebrate 150 years of continuous operation in 2028, and we enter this current planning process deeply respectful of our responsibilities as stewards of the present and for the future.

Rocky Mountain College has several recent accomplishments of which to be proud, foremost among these is our new Charles Morledge Science Building, which opened for classes in January 2018. In order to continue positioning ourselves as the premiere college for science and pre-health science education, we also established a new Center for the Health Professions and added a full-time faculty member in the biology program.

The College received a generous grant from the Bair Family Foundation to develop a new Academic Resource Center and an equally generous grant to develop capacity and programming for Native American students and wider diversity initiatives. New staff positions to complement and develop these philanthropy-funded initiatives indicate our continued investment in functions to support student success throughout College programming.

In the fall of 2018 the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities granted Rocky Mountain College the approval to offer doctoral degrees in occupational therapy. In January of 2019 the first cohort of thirty students began classes in new facilities in the Charles Morledge Science Building. Now entering its second year, the OTD program is approaching full staffing and we are anticipating a second full cohort of thirty students for this innovative and already highly-regarded program.

We also also pleased that ARC-PA approved our recent application for cohort expansion. The first expanded class will begin their educational journey in newly renovated facilities in July of 2020.

Rocky Mountain College has achieved new levels of distinction both in and out of the classroom, and we are proud to celebrate the achievements of our athletic programs. In fact, in 2018-19 the Battlin’ Bears finished 27th out of 277 NAIA programs in the Learfield Cup, which is awarded by

the NAIA for overall athletic excellence Twelve of fourteen varsity teams were named NAIA Scholar Teams in 2018-19, and RMC can celebrate 102 Academic All-Conference award winners and 53 National Scholar Athletes.

Importantly, Rocky Mountain College has managed to maintain fairly steady overall enrollments over the past few years in an especially challenging undergraduate recruitment market. As the College continues its next stage of evolution, we hope to accomplish modest but steady gains in undergraduate enrollment predicated on strategic initiatives to further increase the value proposition of the RMC student experience.

The faculty and staff have always been and continue to be dedicated teachers, mentors, and supporters of the students we are honored to learn with and from. It is through a tireless devotion to their vocation as educators and professionals that the future will be secured. It is in appreciation of this devotion that Rocky Mountain College presents a vision for 2028.

Vision for 2028

Rocky Mountain College will be the leader among all institutions in the region for transformational student experiences. The foundation for this leadership will be faculty and staff with a demonstrated and uncompromised commitment to educating and mentoring the students drawn to our broad array of exceptional and comprehensive liberal arts, pre-professional, and graduate programs of study.

Rocky Mountain College will be nationally recognized for innovation and excellence in educational design and execution. Intentionally integrated opportunities for reflection will produce graduates who are aware of and capable of communicating the distinctive value of an RMC education. Our exceptional curricular experience will be supported by equally exceptional co-curricular programming and, in sum, will comprise the ***Rocky Mountain College Outcome: The successful development of students from a wide range of backgrounds to a shared high standard of achievement.*** RMC's transformational education will provide the foundation for personal and professional success enabled by core capacities to think critically, communicate effectively, and collaborate productively with others. Such core capacities will be essential to understanding and resolving the complex challenges facing our communities and our world now and in the future.

Rocky Mountain College not only dedicates itself to reaffirming our core themes, refining and focusing the meaning of those themes, and to deliberately enhancing the development and integration of our core themes throughout the student experience, we also dedicate ourselves to the principles of equity and inclusion that define fair and just communities.

Strategic Themes

I. Academic Distinction

Rocky Mountain College has, for nearly 150 years, delivered a quality education to generations of students through a fairly traditional model similar to many other small liberal-arts centered colleges. We instruct students largely face-to-face in a classroom setting in relatively small classes with a strong emphasis on mentoring relationships. This model is highly valued throughout the College, particularly by the faculty. To achieve greater distinctiveness, we do not intend to meaningfully alter that which we all value and appreciate. Rather, we intend to enhance our execution of this model according to appropriate innovations and best practices.

Goals:

1. Rocky Mountain College will receive national recognition for innovative curricular design and execution that develops a broad range of learners into skilled and knowledgeable problem solvers and communicators;
2. Rocky Mountain College will achieve a balance of undergraduate and graduate programs that are models of excellence and that both preserve the distinguished history of the College and situate the College for long-term relevance and success;
3. Rocky Mountain College will achieve its aspiration to be a comprehensive learning organization where core values and learning competencies are developed and reflected upon throughout all areas of the student experience and all members of the community contribute to a shared vision, shared practices, and shared expectations even while engaging and valuing respectful disagreement.

Year One Actions:

1. Complete revision of Integrated Core Curriculum;
2. Implement and expand active/engaged-learning initiatives;
3. Complete revision of faculty evaluation to reflect high expectations of teaching performance;
4. Plan and begin implementation of new graduate program.

II. Transformational Environment

As noted above, the educational experience at Rocky Mountain College is primarily traditional in the sense that it is overwhelmingly on campus and face-to-face. We continue to value the quality of learning and mentoring relationships that prosper in this traditional environment. The College is now dedicating itself to enhancing the learning environment through investments in the creation of purpose-designed learning spaces where the central objective is the deep learning that comes from applying skills, evaluating ideas, and employing information to solve complex

problems through collaboration and effective communication. Furthermore, the College will develop a “culture of learning and reflection” throughout all relevant aspects of the student experience, from classrooms, to residence halls, to locker rooms, and beyond.

Goals:

1. Rocky Mountain College will be recognized as leader in the design of learning spaces that support and promote transformational student experiences;
2. Rocky Mountain College will be recognized for the excellence of co-curricular programming that emphasizes diversity, community engagement, leadership development, and experiential learning;
3. Rocky Mountain College will model and implement best practices of equity, inclusion, professional behavior, and organizational excellence throughout its operations;
4. Transformational learning practices will be intentionally implemented through curricular and co-curricular programming.

Year One Actions:

1. Completion of Campus Master Plan;
2. Continue to transform current learning spaces into high-impact learning spaces;
3. College-wide conversations on transformational learning;
4. Development of a Diversity and Inclusivity Taskforce;
5. College diversity statement:

Rocky Mountain College is committed to equity and inclusion. We pursue and embrace all forms of diversity throughout all operations, from the classroom to the athletic field and beyond. We are a community devoted to free inquiry and the freedom to express ideas and opinions that lead to civil dialogue and deep understanding of meaningful and reasonable issues. Our core values insist on respect for the individual based on each person's inherent dignity and value regardless of differences of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, and veteran status.

Rocky Mountain College seeks to contribute to a world characterized by mutual respect and reasoned dialogue. To that end, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive community that, through intentional recruitment, clear communication, mutual respect, and a collaborative atmosphere, draws upon a wide variety of views and is supportive of each member of its faculty, students, and staff.

6. Complete a student leadership development plan.

III. Enrollment Management

We can anticipate that the greater portion of undergraduate students attracted to Rocky Mountain College over the next ten years will be traditional college-age recent high school graduates. The prospects for the realization of meaningful enrollment growth for this population of students indicate some challenges in the near term, though some potential opportunities in the longer term. According to the most comprehensive and widely-used review of higher education demographic projections, after “steady increases in the overall number of high school graduates over the last 15 years, the U.S. is heading into a period of stagnation” (*Knocking at the College Door*, p. 1). This stagnation and even decline will be particularly acute in Midwest and the Northeastern U.S., while parts of the South and the West are largely projected to realize flat or slight increases in high school graduates. Over the next several years, Montana is expected to remain essentially flat. Without making significant investments in key program development and marketing, RMC is not likely to realize undergraduate enrollment goals through natural increases in our primary student market of regional high school graduates. The college must engage a wide range of strategies and initiatives to achieve our undergraduate new and transfer student enrollment goals.

Goals:

1. Rocky Mountain College will develop excellence in and effectively promote key academic programs for which there is demonstrable market opportunity while remaining consistent without our traditions and identity;
2. Rocky Mountain College will be a leader in the development of appropriate co-curricular programs that attract active, serious, and engaged students;
3. Rocky Mountain College will be recognized by potential students for its exceptional value as measured by the quality of the educational experience and outcomes relative to overall costs.

Year One Actions:

1. Implement promotion and marketing of Biology and Business programs;
2. Develop “E-Sports” team and pursue further development of Speech and Debate as co-curricular enrollment drivers;
3. Plan for new graduate academic program development;
4. Refine pricing model;
5. Develop plan for undergraduate market opportunities.

IV. Financial Stability and Growth

Rocky Mountain College is positioned to emerge from recent financial challenges, and we continue to have strong confidence in the forthcoming success of new academic programs, enrollment strategies, financial aid management strategies, and fundraising organization and processes, that will realize a positive fiscal margin next year with increasing margins in future years.

Goals:

1. Rocky Mountain College will refine financial management and predictive modeling processes that consistently allow for the precise alignment of expenses with revenues;
2. Rocky Mountain College will refine financial aid strategies throughout operations in order to precisely align pricing with the value of the student experience;
3. Annual Scholarship Fund revenues will stabilize at 7% of the College's annual Institutional Aid budget, and grow in parallel with the required aid necessary to achieve enrollment goals;
4. Grow the College's endowment to a level that will sustain annual distributions equal to 15% of the College's annual Institutional Aid budget, with corpus and annual distribution growth corresponding to the required aid necessary to achieve enrollment goals.

Year One Actions:

1. Refine RMC's advancement strategy, with attention on setting, and monitoring performance against, appropriate benchmarks in alumni relations and donor acquisition, growth, and retention.
2. Develop a comprehensive endowment-building and donor relations plan.
3. Refine Financial Aid NTR Projection process
4. Optimization of 5 year operating pro forma model
5. Develop Long Term operating pro forma model (10-20 year)

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Key Aspects:

1. **Reflect:** Students should understand and intentionally consider the process of personal development;
2. **Challenge:** Students should approach and extend the limits of their intellectual and social capacities and develop an openness to challenges of core beliefs;
3. **Include:** Students should encounter meaningful diversity and develop capacities to understand and collaborate across differences;
4. **Integrate:** Students should integrate learning across the educational experience and into their personal and, ultimately, their professional lives;
5. **Engage:** Students' academic and co-curricular experiences are defined by active and engaged participation in the learning process;
6. **Relate:** Students develop meaningful relationships as part of academic programs and College communities;