



GREAT FALLS
COLLEGE
MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY

2022-27 STRATEGIC PLAN

FORGING FUTURES



Inclusivity

- Clear the path for students to accomplish their educational goals
- Foster an environment that expands enrollment and celebrates student resilience
- Create excitement for campus activities and events



Opportunities

- Distinguish Great Falls College by building brand recognition and community awareness through consistent design and promotion
- Intentionally target populations to support strategic initiatives of Great Falls College
- Develop opportunities to connect alumni with one another and Great Falls College



Excellence

- Seek and encourage efficiency and innovation in the work of the college
- Align human, physical and/or financial resources to support strategic plan initiatives

Year Two Report

Mission

Great Falls College MSU provides high quality educational experiences supporting student success and meeting the needs of our community.

Vision

The vision of Great Falls College MSU is to strengthen communities through excellence, innovation, and collaboration.

History and Framework

Strategic plans are a way to operationalize our mission and measure mission fulfillment while focusing energy and resources to strategic priorities. Including campus-wide input in strategic planning is a best practice, so the Executive Council attended several campus meetings in fall 2021 (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Joint Directors, Business Operations, Academic Affairs Team, and Student Government) and asked what areas of improvement the College could work on in the next five years. From those comments, the Executive Council identified three themes (later to be named *pillars*): Inclusivity, Opportunities, and Excellence. They also used the feedback to describe each of these pillars and identify objectives within the (later named *strategic plan goals*).

For each strategic plan goal, the Executive Council drafted metrics to make them measurable and asked the Strategic Analysis and Reporting committee (StAR) to review them and prepare a final draft, as well as identify target metrics for each. The StAR committee revised the metrics, asked for campus feedback in April 2022, and then the Executive Council approved them on May 9, 2022. The StAR committee then gathered and reviewed available baseline data, drafted target metrics, asked for campus feedback, and College Council approved the target metrics on February 13, 2023 (for pillar 3), April 18, 2023 (for pillar 1), and October 13, 2023 (for pillar 2).

Strategic Initiatives

Once the plan was finalized the next step was to identify strategic initiatives so all units and committees set strategic goals that aligned to the new strategic plan, which the College Council named *Forging Futures*. A report that shows all strategic goals aligned to pillars, strategic plan goals, and metrics is available on Tableau Server:

https://tableau.mus.edu/#/site/greatfalls/workbooks/2366?:origin=card_share_link.

All strategic goals are submitted to the StAR committee for review, and progress updates are submitted bi-annually via strategic action plans. The StAR committee compiles all strategic action plans and will share them with the College Council bi-annually, with the first report being shared in April 2024. A brief report showing how far along units and committees are with their strategic goals is available on our website:

https://www.gfcmsu.edu/about/Planning/goal_progress.html.

The StAR committee annually reviews the strategic goal-setting and reporting process to seek process improvements and identified two improvements: 1) all *new* strategic goals will need to align to a pillar, strategic plan goal, and metric; and 2) all *new* multi-year strategic goals will require annual indicators. These two changes will only apply to any new strategic goal submitted after July 2024. The first improvement aims to align the work of all strategic initiatives directly to the measurements of the strategic plan and will help units and committees see what results they directly or indirectly influence. The second will support units and committees in identifying SMART goals and help assess how far along they are in completing their goal for the strategic action plans.

Resource Allocation

For fiscal years 2023 and 2024, the Business Office asked that any additional departmental budget requests must be aligned to the strategic plan. Also, in September 2023, the Executive Director of Operations created a strategic funding request form and asked that any unit or committee who had financial resource needs for their strategic initiatives, and anyone with ideas for recruitment, retention, or completion initiatives could request funding. The Executive Council reviewed all requests and priority was given to strategic initiatives or any other ideas that aligned with the strategic plan. The projects that were funded included recruitment materials for Admissions, onboarding software for Human Resources, and new furniture for the atrium and Student Engagement Office.

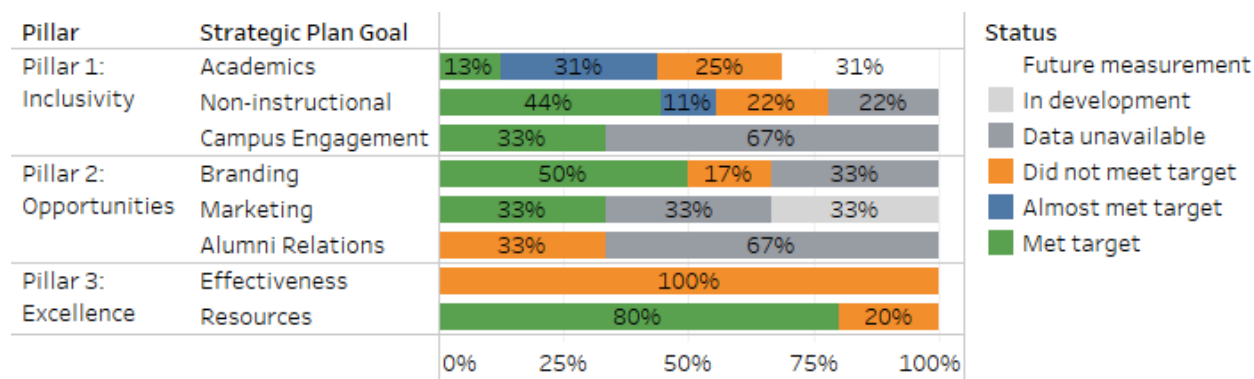
Assessment of Target Metrics

There are 46 target metrics within *Forging Futures* that are monitored by the StAR committee annually. To measure progress, the StAR committee has defined that meeting, or almost meeting, at least 70% of the annual target metrics in year five is one way in which we can measure mission fulfillment.

Year One

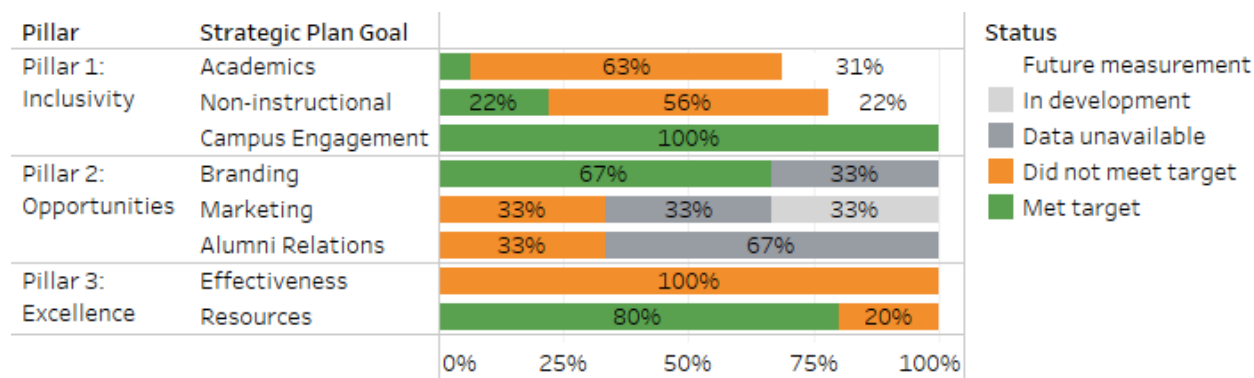
As of August 2024, the College met 33% (n= 15), almost met 13% (n= 6), and did not meet 22% (n= 10) of the target metrics for year one (academic year 2022-23). Another 33% (n= 15) of the target metrics did not have data available, was a future measurement, or the

reports were still in development. In year one, the College met, or almost met, 46% of the target metrics. The image below shows the status of all target metrics by pillar and strategic plan goal as of August 23, 2024.



Year Two

As of August 2024, the College met 30% (n= 14), almost met 0% (n= 0), and did not meet 41% (n= 19) of the target metrics for year two (academic year 2023-24). Another 28% (n= 13) of the target metrics did not have data available, was a future measurement, or the reports were still in development. In year two, the College met, or almost met, 30% of the target metrics. The image below shows the status of all target metrics by pillar and strategic plan goal as of August 23, 2024.



To be on track to reach the goal of having met or almost met 70% of the target metrics in year five, the College needed the percentage to be at least 52% in year two.

Recommendations from the StAR Committee

Forging Futures was developed by gathering campus input to create an inclusive strategic plan. The strategic goal setting and reporting process was new to the College, so there have been many best practices identified and lessons learned. To preserve this knowledge for future strategic plans the StAR committee makes the following recommendations:

- 1) A one-page strategic plan. The College should aim to fit all pillars, strategic plan goals, and metrics onto one page. With three pillars, eight strategic plan goals, and 27 original metrics (three were removed on October 13, 2023), *Forging Futures* is three pages long. Including the 46 target metrics, it is over four pages long. Fewer strategic plan goals and metrics will help focus the College's resources and efforts to key strategic areas.
- 2) Target metrics with existing baseline data. Thirty-three of the 46 target metrics (72%) were brand new measurements. This means that processes for data collection, reference tables, and dashboards all needed to be created before baseline data could be available-- and baseline data was not available for all target metrics before they were finalized. With only one person doing this institutional research, it took two academic years to provide results for the available target metrics in year one. For future plans, no more than 25% of the target metrics should be new measurements. Instead, the College should examine existing measurements and institutional reports to identify gaps and select which to focus on for future plans.
- 3) Inclusive strategic plan goals and metrics. *Forging Futures* metric E1.1, Increase the number of process improvements implemented each academic year, allows any unit or committee to align their work to the strategic plan. Every strategic plan should have such an inclusive metric.