

FULFILLING OUR FUTURE

Pickens Technical College
2024-2028 Strategic Plan



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Pickens Community,

Since 1971, Pickens Technical College has been committed to preparing students with the knowledge, technical skills, and experiences needed to succeed in high-demand careers. Through exceptional Career and Technical Education, we have helped generations of students achieve Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness while meeting the evolving demands of business and industry.

It is an honor to serve as Director of Pickens Technical College and to continue building upon this strong foundation. Our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan reflects the voices of students, staff, industry partners, and community members who helped shape a shared vision for our future. Together, we have developed a roadmap that ensures Pickens remains responsive, innovative, and committed to excellence in an ever-changing workforce landscape.

This Strategic Plan is rooted in our purpose, vision, and mission. Our purpose reminds us that our community needs confident and skilled employees to fulfill the evolving demands of business and industry. Our vision is to prepare all students for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, and our mission is to provide unsurpassed, equitable Career and Technical Education. These foundational principles guide every decision we make and every opportunity we create for our students.

As we move forward, we remain committed to the priorities established in this Strategic Plan. We will foster Student & Staff Success, build Career Pathways and Industry Alignment, strengthen an Equitable Learning Community, elevate Community Awareness & Recognition, and leverage Data-Informed Decision Making to continuously improve our programs and student outcomes. Through the Coherent Actions outlined in this plan, we will strengthen our systems, invest in our educators, cultivate strategic partnerships, expand work-based learning experiences, and ensure our programs continue to meet the evolving needs of our community.

The success of this Strategic Plan depends on all of us. I am grateful for the dedication of our students, staff, families, business and industry partners, and community members who make Pickens Technical College an exceptional place to learn and grow.

Together, we will continue pursuing the vision set forth in this Strategic Plan and preparing students for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness while meeting the evolving demands of business and industry. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to Pickens Technical College. I look forward to the work we will accomplish together.



With gratitude,

Andrew Vidockler

Director

Pickens Technical College

OVERVIEW

Building on a strong foundation of technical education excellence since 1971, Pickens Technical College is committed to continuous improvement and community impact. Recognizing the dynamic landscape of industry needs and a thriving Aurora community, we've embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process. This Strategic Plan outlines our vision for the next five years (2024-2028), focusing on key areas for growth and ensuring we remain a leader in delivering high-quality career and technical education.



PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic planning process aimed to achieve three key objectives:

- **Gather stakeholder input**

Extensive engagement was conducted to capture insights from internal and external partners, ensuring the plan reflects the needs of all stakeholders. These activities included:

- 10 focus groups engaging 35 total individuals (eleven industry partners, twenty Pickens staff members, three peer technical colleges, and one non-Pickens APS staff member).
- A community-wide survey (available in English and Spanish) that received 191 responses.

- **Identify top strategic priorities**

Through a comprehensive analysis, Pickens identified the most critical areas for focus in the coming years.

- **Develop a transparent and inclusive plan**

The process was designed to create a readily understandable document that clearly communicates Pickens' future direction to all impacted internal and external community members and partners.



STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

Pickens Technical College's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 outlines a comprehensive framework to guide continuous improvement and achieve institutional goals. The plan is built upon two key components:

1) Guiding Pillars

These five guiding pillars are the foundational principles that will focus Pickens' strategic direction and approach.

**Student &
Staff Success**

**Community Awareness
& Recognition**

**Career Pathways
& Industry
Alignment**

**Equitable Learning
Community**

**Data-Informed
Decision Making**

2) Coherent Actions

These seven actions describe the ways that Pickens will carry out its Guiding Pillars.

- **Address Systemic Inequities**
- **Build People-Centric Systems**
- **Cultivate Strategic Partnerships**
- **Empower Students to Develop Durable Skills**
- **Expand Instructional Models & Work-Based Learning**
- **Invest in Instructor Development**
- **Prioritize Program Viability**



PICKENS BY THE NUMBERS

Postsecondary Completion, Placement, and Licensure (CPL) Figures⁺



79%

of students complete their CTE program



81%

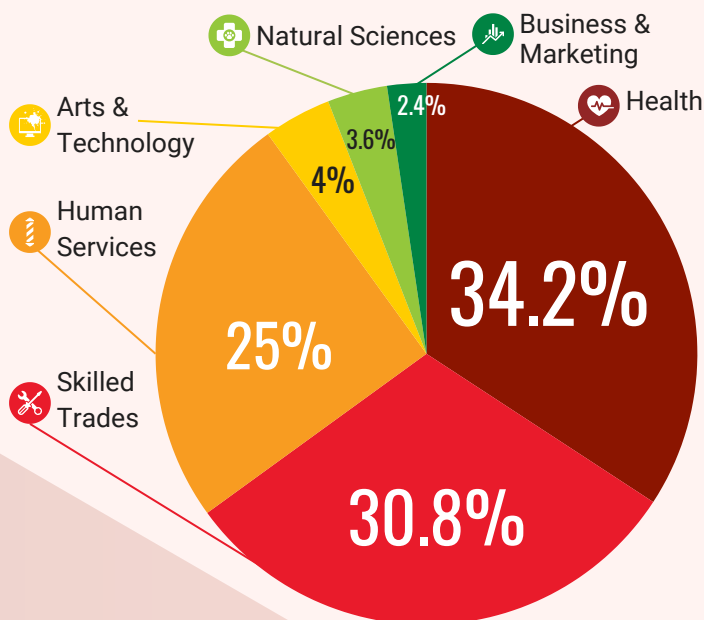
of graduates are placed in a job relevant to their field of study



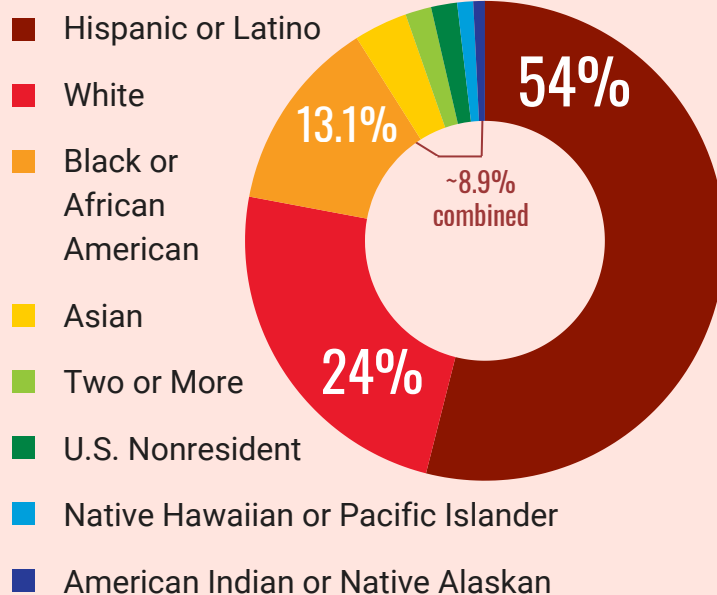
100%

of completers pass the career and program licensure exam

Postsecondary Enrollment by Field⁺



Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Students^{*}



Key Facts on our Students, Staff and Educators

97%

Staff retention rate^x

92%

Rate of Pickens educators that came from industry^x

37%

Rate of students that are concurrent enrollment high schoolers^{*}

1,300

Annual enrollment of all students^{*}

^{*} IPEDS Fall 2023 Report

⁺ CPL 22-23 Data

^x Calculated on 22-23 Actuals

PURPOSE, VISION, & MISSION

At Pickens, we feel that a clear understanding of our core identity is central to authentically pursuing our goals. These guiding principles can be found within three foundational concepts: Pickens' purpose, vision, and mission.

Our purpose embodies the "why" – the fundamental reason for our existence and the effects we strive to have on the community. Our vision defines the "what" – the desired future state and the ultimate outcome we aim to achieve for our students. Our mission outlines the "how" – the specific approach we utilize to achieve the vision.

These core principles work in tandem, forming the foundation from which the Strategic Plan builds. The Guiding Pillars and Coherent Actions outlined in this plan create a comprehensive roadmap for pursuing the future, set forth in our purpose, vision, and mission.



PURPOSE

Our community needs confident and skilled employees to fulfill the evolving demands of business and industry.

VISION

Pickens Technical College prepares all students for Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR).

MISSION

To provide unsurpassed, equitable Career and Technical Education.



GUIDING PILLARS

Pickens' Guiding Pillars focus the overall strategy and approach to addressing the findings and opportunities identified by our stakeholders. These five pillars direct and constrain actions and investments the team will pursue over the next five years. They have been identified as essential and foundational to achieving any short- or long-term goal.



Student & Staff Success

Pickens fosters a thriving community where students and staff of all backgrounds achieve academic excellence, career readiness, and personal growth. By strengthening support systems, we will provide a leading model for inclusive learning.



Community Awareness & Recognition

We will increase visibility of the Pickens brand within our communities and showcase the unique career paths and technical skills we offer, making Pickens a recognizable leader in career and technical education.



Career Pathways & Industry Alignment

Pickens maintains a living connection between our programs and the industries we serve — building clear career pathways for students, forging deep employer relationships, and continuously evolving our offerings to stay ahead of workforce demands.



Equitable Learning Community

Rooted in belonging, Pickens is focused on cultivating a dynamic environment that honors the unique identities and experiences of all students and staff. We will translate this commitment into ongoing initiatives that empower individuals to reach their full potential and thrive on their unique paths.



Data-Informed Decision Making

Pickens will leverage the power of data to continuously improve our programs and student outcomes. We will gather insights into performance metrics, program effectiveness, and industry trends to guide intentional decision-making. Please see COE program improvement plans [here](#)

COHERENT ACTIONS

The Coherent Actions describe the specific ways Pickens will take action to carry out the Guiding Pillars. They are coordinated approaches and resource allocations designed to be accomplished in five years or less. Each Coherent Action supports multiple Guiding Pillars, so as Pickens advances against each one, it will make progress toward multiple established priorities.

1 Address Systemic Inequities

Identify and understand systemic barriers within our programs and support systems, and expand initiatives that address these inequities to foster an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all. Communicate the impact of these efforts on our students and staff, sharing both successes and challenges, to continuously improve.

2 Build People-Centric Systems

Reinforce and develop organizational systems related to individuals, processes, communication, and technology to increase transparency, empathy, trust, and sense of belonging.

3 Cultivate Strategic Partnerships

Through intentional collaboration, support the growth of programs that equip students with the high-demand skills needed for successful careers in emerging fields, leading to impactful outcomes for our graduates.

4 Empower Students to Develop Durable Skills

Incorporate opportunities for students to explore and develop essential skills for lifelong success within classrooms, student organizations, and work-based learning. Assess skill mastery to ensure they graduate ready for the future.



5 Expand Instructional Models & Work-Based Learning

Expand how and where students learn — developing innovative instructional approaches that meet diverse learning needs, and growing work-based learning pathways that give students direct, meaningful exposure to the industries they're entering.

6 Invest in Instructor Development

Be a champion for instructors and staff to find tailored opportunities, own their professional development, and grow within their fields and instructional practices.

7 Prioritize Program Viability

Develop proactive methods to assess program viability and make data-informed decisions, ensuring Pickens offers impactful programs aligned with the greater Aurora community's needs.



IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

This Strategic Plan serves as the public-facing blueprint for achieving Pickens' vision. To translate these goals into actionable steps, a detailed Implementation Plan will accompany the Strategic Plan. This internal plan will outline targeted tactics corresponding to the Coherent Actions to serve as the practical roadmap for achieving the Strategic Plan's priorities.

To ensure successful execution, the Implementation Plan will be collaborative, data-driven, and adaptable.

- **Collaborative**

A senior leader assumes accountability for ensuring the Strategic Plan is prioritized amidst ongoing operations. Proactive communication strategies will keep stakeholders informed throughout execution.

- **Data-Driven**

SMART success metrics are defined for each task. These metrics will be accompanied by efficient data collection methods enabling regular progress monitoring.

- **Adaptable**

The initial internal roadmap outlines tactics for the first 90 days, fostering concentrated effort on early wins. Ongoing evaluation and a proactive approach enables adjustments for subsequent 90-day increments, ensuring the approach remains responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.

