



EDUCATION **MASTER PLAN**

January 2022

2022 - 2032



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Education is not the piling on of learning, information, data, facts, skills, or abilities – that’s training or instruction – but is rather making visible what is hidden as a seed.” Thomas Moore

It is my distinct pleasure and honor to present the College of the Redwoods 2022-2032 Education Master Plan. There has never been a greater need for us to revisit the Education Master Plan (EMP). The circumstances surrounding the College’s future are very dynamic and we have seen the pace of change accelerate as a result of the COVID pandemic. We understand that the College will need change in order to remain viable for years to come.

We are challenged with finding ways to continue offering relevant education to a student population that must be prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world. We are also challenged with developing public/public and public/private partnerships that will bring economic prosperity to our region.

This revised EMP is an affirmation of the many educational improvements and initiatives that have already been executed by our faculty and academic administrators in response to the new challenges and opportunities at the College. The plan makes clear the strategic efforts that our College should prioritize in the next ten years, allowing for the flexibility and resiliency that the future will demand.

Our unique and innovative EMP is the culmination of the work of the Education Master Plan Guiding Coalition and the incredible efforts of several faculty and administrators districtwide who provided feedback throughout the open and interactive creative process. I am deeply appreciative to Professor Chris Gaines for his leadership in developing the planning document as well as the writing team of Peter Blakemore, John Johnston, Levi Gill, and Molly Blakemore. A special thanks goes to Ruthe Rhodes, Nicole Bryant Lescher, Sean Thomas, and Ashley Knowlton from our English department who made significant contributions to the final draft of this document.

Members of the Guiding Coalition and faculty and staff who participated in the working groups all helped craft a document that provides a roadmap that will lead the College boldly forward. I want to thank the Guiding Coalition members for their collegiality and commitment to the planning process: Gary Sokolow, Erin Wall, Sean Thomas, Kerry Mayer, Jon Pedicino, Derek Glavich, John Johnston, Wendy Riggs, Philip Mancus, Levi Gill, Peter Blakemore, Reno Giovannetti, Angelina Hill, Shannon Walkley, and Natalia Margulis.

The revised Education Master Plan is designed to be an anchor to which the College’s fiscal, annual, enrollment management, and human resources planning processes will link, as community trends change, and emerging needs warrant revisions. Outcome assessments and program reviews will help the District innovate as needs change. The ultimate goal is to take each program to its highest level in meeting the needs of our students and our community.

The six major anchor themes defined in the Revised Education Master Plan as critical areas for the future are:

- Becoming the Preferred Transfer Pathway to Cal Poly Humboldt
- Expanding and Prioritizing Offerings that Prepare Students for Living-Wage Jobs
- Creating a More Nimble and Adaptable Institution Through Improved Strategic Planning
- Establishing Stronger Wraparound Experiences for Students' Total Connection
- Pursuing the Future of Learning
- Increasing commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

These themes also align with the context of the changing landscape in higher education and have a clear focus on student success and economic prosperity. It is important to note that the significant accomplishment of the objectives delineated in the past Education Master Plan, the College's Annual Plan, and the Institutional Effectiveness Scorecard, paved the way for developing this revised EMP. Highlights of these accomplishments include:

- Increased number of students who have earned degrees and certificates
- Significant growth in online learning
- Introduction of new transfer degrees and certificate pathways
- Expansion of the enterprise-wide learning management system (Canvas)
- Surpassing the institutional set standards for course retention rate, fall to spring persistence, and overall and online course success
- Steady increase of direct placement in transfer level math and English
- Increased number of students with a job closely related to their field of study

Keith Flamer, Ph.D.
President



EDUCATION MASTER PLAN

This Education Master Plan represents the outcome of a deeply reflective, institution-wide process approach to planning.

Planning in Light of Challenges and Opportunities

In order to serve our students and communities, we have approached the planning process with awareness of and attention to local and national challenges and opportunities, as well as the requirements and expectations of our accrediting and regulatory bodies. The world we live in has become deeply polarized. The global pandemic of COVID-19 has exacerbated those divisions. Never in our lifetimes has the need for civic-minded, fact-based, heterodox dialogue seemed more vital. Never before has the call for social and environmental stability seemed so urgent. Our institution must become more nimble: we must remove barriers to student success, we must become more accessible, and we must remain relevant to the communities we serve.

While these nationwide challenges seem daunting, they represent a powerful opportunity for College of the Redwoods to provide leadership. Our institution is at the forefront of educating human beings to be better thinkers and more productive members of civil society. We have never been more relevant.

Centering in Our Commitments to Students

More than 80% of College of the Redwoods students are focused on finding meaningful, living-wage work or transfer to the next level of education at institutions like Humboldt State University. We need to continue to ask how our college can prioritize investments to help students achieve these goals.

For a free and democratic society to thrive, its people must cultivate community so that all are welcomed and included, critical inquiry is embraced, and diversity of thought empowers all members. We have approached the Education Master Plan with this idea of community in mind. Humility, curiosity, and determination to understand our time, our place, and our diverse people, will continue to help us plan so that our institution evolves in providing accessible and relevant transfer, career, and adult education of the highest quality.

Preparing for Local Development and Vital Change

The current trends in local economic development and change also shaped the Education Master Plan. We need to prepare our students for the emergence of new industries and the jobs the future will demand. We will soon benefit from advanced information corridors with terminal outlets in Humboldt Bay, improvements and expansions of educational systems in Del Norte through a Promise Neighborhood Grant to the Yurok Tribe, and the transformation of Humboldt State University into a third polytechnic institution for the CSU system. College of the Redwoods must prepare for vital change.

With change in mind, we must continue to question our spending to better allocate scarce resources. The mentality of “If you build it, they will come” must be coupled with an understanding of why people might choose our institution and how our offerings are relevant and valuable to them, considering current trends and the emergence of new workforce needs.

Designing from Inquiry

In creating this Education Master Plan, our team asked several important questions:

- How will the needs and expectations of our students change in a post-pandemic world?
- How can College of the Redwoods better serve our students across modalities?
- Which courses can be taught effectively in modes other than face-to-face?
- How is technology likely to evolve, and what kinds of opportunities and challenges will these changes present?
- How can we leverage technological teaching and learning innovations to best meet our students' needs?
- What new student populations will we attract, and how can we best serve them?
- How can we embrace change and innovation at CR while improving collaboration and transparency between faculty, staff, administration, and the communities that we serve?
- How do we strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in support of student success?
- How can College of the Redwoods become a leader in innovative programming for ecological and social sustainability, while expanding career, transfer, and emerging industry opportunities for students?

Developing Capacity and Agility

To meet our future, the college must be ready for complex and foundational shifts that will require our institution to be more agile, more relevant, and more responsive to the needs of the communities we serve and the students who trust us with their education. Toward that end, we need to:

1. Create a strong sense of community at our institution that welcomes all to participate. We must rekindle the desire to create a civil society, regard for open expression and thoughtful consideration of heterodox ideas, and a sense of authentic membership in our classrooms, campuses, and towns that comes from honoring the centrality of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Offer relevant educational choices, including the study of the liberal arts and humanities, which foster critical thinking and leadership skills.
3. Offer career technical education that responds to evolving workforce needs and rapidly developing new industries.
4. Communicate the unique value of what we offer at College of the Redwoods so that students continue to choose us from among the array of educational options practically unimaginable just a decade earlier.
5. Cultivate an inclusive community focused on equity and mutual respect so that all students feel a sense of membership in their classrooms and across campus and can engage in academically challenging work in pursuit of their goals.

To meet these needs, the college must:

1. Continue to develop measurable goals and strategies that make CR relevant and desirable to our communities. We must actively seek out continuous dialog with industry leaders and other members and organizations in the communities we serve.
2. Continue to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff so that they provide students with skills and practices they will need in order to thrive.
3. Continue to encourage innovation and collaboration between liberal arts, career, science, and technology faculty to promote a curricular renaissance that reaffirms the interdependence of all the disciplines while underscoring the value of higher education to its students, communities, and partners.
4. Continue to foster interdisciplinary collaboration between career technical education and traditional academic pathways and deepen the connections between the college faculty and staff, our students, and the surrounding communities. The college must set markers to check the success of future programs developed for these purposes.
5. Continue to review disaggregated data of programs and services with the goal of ongoing improvement of our programs and services.

CRITICAL AREAS FOR THE FUTURE

The six themes below reflect our inquiry and assessment and anchor our focus and efforts.

They are not listed in order of importance as all are deemed critical to the success of our institution. Collectively, the initiatives below will help us continue to build the blueprint for working together towards excellence over the next decade.

INITIATIVE # 1

Become the Preferred Transfer Pathway to Cal Poly Humboldt¹

The majority (~75%) of our transfer students attend Humboldt State University. We believe that demand for the transfer pathway to Cal Poly Humboldt will increase over time. Why? The demand for existing polytechnic institutions in the CSU system is far greater than the two currently existing polytechnic CSUs can serve. Community colleges near these institutions serve a vital role in offering students another effective route into the heavily impacted polytechnic system. College of the Redwoods has an opportunity to be the most desirable transfer pathway to Cal Poly Humboldt, including for students from outside our region who hadn't considered CR before. These students will have myriad transfer options to consider in the future, including fully online programs. To be successful, we must focus our limited resources on programs and services that align with the most demanded transfer pathways to Cal Poly Humboldt and make a compelling argument for why CR is the best option. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 1.1. Create a CR/Cal Poly Humboldt Pathways Plan to evaluate the most desirable program options and prioritize their development and/or revitalization. Continue to assess and update the plan annually.
- 1.2. Pursue seamless CR/Cal Poly transfer agreements through stackable curriculum and

shared learning experiences.

1.3. Develop accelerated transfer programs that include a variety of modalities to offer maximum flexibility for our students.

1.4. Increase the number of faculty collaborations and course integrations between institutions.

1.5. Align student services between institutions to reduce barriers and to increase student success.

INITIATIVE # 2

Expand and Prioritize Offerings that Prepare Students for Living-Wage Jobs

Many of our students come to us seeking better jobs. In a workforce environment of rapid technological change, it will be an ongoing challenge for higher education to remain relevant in its offerings. To prepare our students for the jobs of the future, CR must improve its partnerships with industry, offer students real-world practice validated by our partners, and become more agile in curriculum and program development. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 2.1. Create a Workforce Development Plan supporting pathways to living-wage jobs. Evaluate the most desirable program options and prioritize their development. Ensure seamless transfers to Cal Poly where possible. Continue to assess and update the plan annually.
- 2.2. Gather data through surveys and dialogue with local businesses and industries to re-design course learning outcomes to meet the needs of required and evolving workforce skills.
- 2.3. Expand the career center, job placement programs, and increase work experience opportunities for all students through internships, job fairs, and site tours.
- 2.4. Integrate current real-world projects and third-party certifications into coursework and completion.
- 2.5. Design associate degree and certificate portfolios through curriculum and course design to show evidence of what students can do that is of value to local industry and community.

¹ The CSU Board of Trustees will vote in January of 2022 to formally change the name to California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. The abbreviated naming convention will be Cal Poly Humboldt.

INITIATIVE # 3

Create a More Nimble and Adaptable Institution

As the pace of change accelerates, the college must develop a means for continuous monitoring of its effectiveness regarding social, community, and workplace needs and its efforts to meet those needs. The college must plan in ways that are proactive rather than merely reactive. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 3.1. Prioritize investments in planning activities that meet local workforce needs and provide transfer opportunities to Cal Poly Humboldt. Conversely, consider divesting in offerings or activities that don't address those needs or deliver those opportunities.
- 3.2. Improve strategic planning processes and proactively adapt organizational structures, campus and facility resources, and technological infrastructure to support evolving student, workforce, and community needs.
- 3.3. Prioritize professional development opportunities central to planning processes (what are the known/unknowns—CR's gaps in knowledge—and how do we address them through targeted professional development?).
- 3.4. Actively promote heterodoxy and trust and a culture of curiosity, risk-taking, and authentic, meaningful assessment to increase consideration of valuable and innovative ideas.
- 3.5. Address underserved people, such as tribal nations, to bring their voices and ideas into ongoing conversations around the future of our institution and how it will affect them.
- 3.6. Engage outreach efforts to promote open dialogue with all communities within the circle of influence of the college. Gather insights about ways the college can best serve diverse regional needs through listening sessions, round-table discussions, and anonymous surveys.

INITIATIVE # 4

Establish Stronger Wraparound Experiences for Students' Total Connection

Our college goal to create a more nimble and well-prepared institution to serve students' needs above all else, the California College Chancellor's Office Vision for Success, and the Guided Pathways Initiative require that we carefully examine and assess the ways our students, potential students, and community members encounter our college, from the first view of our webpages, to our inventory of programs and degrees, to initial counseling and advising assistance, to how they provide us feedback through follow-up surveys, alumni events, and outreach. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 4.1. Create a working group of faculty and staff supported by a student internship team to conduct research and establish recommendations for reducing barriers and improving the student experience.
- 4.2. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of student service programs relative to other programs and activities that improve student success.
- 4.3. Improve the first point-of-contact student services including advising, enrollment services, and financial aid to streamline and enhance students' experiences and sense of belonging.
- 4.4. Align counseling and advising activities with best practices that focus on retention and equity.
- 4.5. Enhance both on-campus and technological connections to increase individual students' sense of connectedness to the college.
- 4.6. Increase the presence of College of the Redwoods in small and/or remote communities by establishing access to academic services, such as computer and internet access, printing, and tutoring at specified locations.

INITIATIVE # 5

Pursue the Future of Learning

We propose an active and intentional focus on developing new curricula and pedagogy that responds directly to the immediate and near-term needs of our communities and optimizes best practices relevant to emerging technology. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 5.1. In partnership with local employers and outside accrediting agencies, create outcomes based on skills and embed learning in real-world and problem-based experiences to prepare students to succeed in a rapidly evolving world of work.
- 5.2. Develop a plan to expand our enrollments beyond traditional geographies and position CR's best online classes and instructors for success on the California Virtual Campus.
- 5.3. Supercharge external professional development to attract our most innovative and forward-thinking faculty in distance education, hands-on, problem-based, and experiential teaching and learning.
- 5.4. Rethink the flexibility of modalities and scheduling to meet student needs and determine possible transformations in scheduling and alternative pathways to completion.
- 5.5. Create opportunities for students to leave the college with portfolios that demonstrate specific skillsets they've attained, including the knowledge and job-search materials that will open doorways to their careers.

INITIATIVE # 6

Increase Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In alignment with and guided by the California Community College Chancellor's Office Vision for

Success and Title V (Section 51201) College of the Redwoods is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In order to increase access, persistence, and success for all students, our institutional planning and goals must reflect an awareness of equity gaps and a dedication to eliminating them through ongoing, cross-campus learning, open dialogue, and data-driven efforts. To achieve this will require focusing on these specifics:

- 6.1. Center success for all students as the goal that shapes and drives our efforts across all roles and all areas of the college.
- 6.2. Engage in ongoing commitments, made visible through our words and systemic efforts, to eliminate barriers to equity.
- 6.3. Create, sustain, and support ongoing opportunities for learning, dialogue, engagement, and community-building, in partnership with students, to identify barriers to equity, learn together, collaboratively problem-solve, and revise.
- 6.4. Continue to review policies, procedures, goals, and resource allocations to identify and eliminate biases or inequities and integrate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all institutional practices.
- 6.5. Utilize internal and external measures to assess the District's progress toward becoming an inclusive and equitable environment where individual and group differences are valued and leveraged. This includes but is not limited to ongoing attention to assessments of campus climate, disaggregated enrollment, retention and success data, and employee recruitment and retention data.
- 6.6. Examine the disproportionate impacts of negative environmental externalities on marginalized populations and underserved communities. Partner with community leaders, non-profit organizations, tribal bodies, and businesses to create and develop appropriate, sustainable initiatives.

ADDENDUM

How we approached planning in the midst of a global pandemic

College of the Redwoods (CR) approached this planning cycle differently than in the past. As colleges everywhere struggled to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis, CR leadership made a conscious decision not to rely on assumptions from the past and instead engaged in robust dialogue about the future of our institution. We were asked to consider the first principles of why we exist, how we uniquely serve our communities, and what we will need to do to continue to be successful in an ever-changing environment. To accomplish this, our planning group questioned whether historical data or precedent would serve us as we assessed a fundamentally different post-pandemic world. In the end, our group reviewed past planning documents including our previous Education Master Plan and Institutional Effectiveness reports to provide a foundation for our dialogue (links to these resources can be found below). However, the majority of our time, energy, and passion was focused on rethinking our college in collaboration with community leaders and colleagues. Our goal was to define how we should evolve as an institution to better serve our students and communities in the future.

The purpose of the Education Master Plan

In a normal cycle, the Education Master Plan is updated every five years to set organizational priorities that reflect the needs of students, employees, and the community. Once in place, the new Education Master Plan guides our college to make sure that we are strategically advancing the achievement of our Mission. For this development cycle, we were challenged to look beyond our normal 5-year planning horizon and imagine initiatives and priorities that would endure for 10 years and beyond.

Our previous Education Master Plan can be found here: [Education Master Plan 2017-2022](#)

In addition, you can learn more about how the Education Master Plan informs our institutional planning at all levels of our organization by reviewing the following flowchart: [Integrated Planning Model](#)

You can find background information about CR, including our history, Mission, and values, at the following link: [College of the Redwoods - About Us](#)

Development of the new plan, including extensive dialogue and feedback

The 2022-2032 Education Master Plan was developed using an institution-wide process approach to planning. The process was supported by our values: the intention to create an iterative, open, and transparent process that encouraged broad participation and where all voices were heard and respected. Our team also aimed to create a process that could serve as a model for future EMP planning cycles.

The individuals and groups selected to lead this work were identified in spring/summer 2020. In fall 2020, an Education Master Planning Guiding Coalition started meeting on a regular basis. This group, led by President Flamer and Professor Chris Gaines, included the following members: Gary Sokolow, Erin Wall, Sean Thomas, Kerry Mayer, Jon Pedicino, Derek Glavich, John Johnston, Wendy Riggs, Philip Mancus, Levi Gill, Peter Blakemore, Reno Giovannetti, Angelina Hill, Shannon Walkley, and Natalia Margulis. These faculty, staff, and administrators had robust conversations regarding community and workforce needs and the critical value that CR provides to our communities. The group also confronted the areas where CR needed to evolve in order to remain relevant and valuable for our students and society in the future.

The planning process was informed by historical data but emphasis was given to real-time feedback from our colleagues, students, and community due to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. To support this approach, Professor Gaines and consultant Denise Vanden Bos gathered input from the community in fall 2020 through a series of twenty-eight interviews. The interviews focused on identifying how CR can better serve the rapidly changing needs of our workforce and community. The interviews were analyzed and the findings were shared broadly.

The following set of themes emerged with regard to the educational opportunities the College should pursue in the future to strengthen our regional workforce and to better align with community needs:

- Prioritize learning opportunities deeply rooted in Humboldt County's unique natural, cultural, and economic ecosystem.
- Expand hands-on, experiential, and project-based learning that embraces interdisciplinary collaboration amongst faculty, students, and community partners.
- Strengthen partnerships with local industry, government, nonprofits, and tribal communities to support the above activities – including internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring.
- Prioritize activities that lead to living wage jobs in our community and continue to strengthen the HSU / CR partnership.

The entire college community was invited to an Education Master Planning discussion session at the beginning of spring 2021. In January 2021, President Flamer and Professor Gaines updated the Board of Trustees about the Education Master Planning process and the challenges and opportunities that were arising out of discussions and information gathering. The Board also had an opportunity to provide input.

The community had another opportunity to provide input about the plan at the inaugural CR Workforce Summit in spring 2021. The summit was attended by sixty-eight leaders from across industries, tribal leadership, non-profit/government, Humboldt State

University (HSU), K-12, and community.

The findings from our community interviews were presented and discussed. The CR President's Council was created as a result of these efforts to support ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and alignment with community leadership.

In summer 2021, a subgroup was formed to draft the planning document for constituent review. This group included the following members: Chris Gaines, Peter Blakemore, John Johnston, Levi Gill, and Molly Blakemore. The resulting draft plan was widely presented and discussed during fall 2021 convocation activities. At convocation, keynote speaker Randall Weaver from the Employment Development Department presented a wealth of information about the current labor market and workforce opportunities in Del Norte and Humboldt County.

At the recommendation of the Academic Senate there were multiple opportunities given for faculty to provide feedback and review drafts. These feedback sessions occurred at:

- Division meetings
- All-faculty meeting
- Meetings of the Academic Senate

In addition to gathering input at these sessions, a web form was created so that written input could be collected throughout the district. Significant contributions to revising this draft came from the following members of the English department: Ruthe Rhodes, Nicole Bryant Lescher, Sean Thomas, and Ashley Knowlton. Input from the discussion sessions, web form, and the English department was presented to the writing group and the Academic Senate, and adjustments to the draft plan continued through most of fall 2021. In December of 2021, the Academic Senate voted unanimously to support the 2022-2032 Education Master Plan.

Once the draft plan was thoroughly reviewed by a variety of stakeholder groups, the plan was sent to the Board of Trustees for review and approval at the January 4th, 2022 meeting.

Two rapidly changing developments that impacted our planning

1. The emergence of Cal Poly Humboldt

Humboldt State University officially applied to become the third polytechnic university in the California State University system. As a key partner and primary transfer pathway for our students, this news had great impact on our planning and one of our key initiatives (“Become the Preferred Transfer Pathway to Cal Poly Humboldt”) was created to reflect this development.

You can find more information about this exciting new development here: [Polytechnic Self-Study and Implementation | Humboldt State University](#)

2. Acceleration of demand for Distance Education classes

Our planning team struggled to predict (with any degree of confidence) the long-term impacts of the move to fully online education in the early days of the pandemic. We extensively debated the following questions:

- Will students increasingly prefer online classes in the future?
- Will students have more choices for completing degrees or certificates online from other institutions?
- How well is our organization positioned to serve the changing needs of our students?

Our planning team believed that sustained and increasing demand for online education was likely in a post-pandemic world. Our team also believed that the COVID-19 crisis accelerated pre-existing preferences for online education rather than causing this trend. The crisis likely reinforced preferences in certain students who were pre-disposed to online classes while introducing new students to the convenience and flexibility of the modality. Given that a potential CR student in the future will be able to complete online courses from the California Virtual Campus and/or myriad

other new offerings, it is critical that we pay close attention to how well CR is adapting to these trends.

Due to the evolving nature of the situation, our planning team concluded that we needed to improve our monitoring of student preferences and plan for a future that serves a higher number of online students. We also acknowledged that not all classes offered by CR are appropriate for distance education and that this modality can create barriers for students in a variety of ways. Three initiatives (“Create a More Nimble and Adaptable Institution” and “Pursue the Future of Learning” and “Establish Stronger Wraparound Experiences for Students’ Total Connection”) were created to specifically address these issues.

Assessing the Education Master Plan and sources of institutional data

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee at CR is tasked with regularly reviewing the progress made in carrying out the initiatives detailed in the Education Master Plan.

To view the most recent Institutional Effectiveness report, including assessment of our 2017-2022 Educational Master Plan, please find the report here: [Institutional Effectiveness Report](#)

The report includes myriad data and observations that represent the best single source of information regarding CR’s performance relative to its goals as well as student demographic and success metrics. These data and this report will be updated to assess our new 2022-2032 Education Master Plan.



7351 TOMPKINS HILL ROAD, EUREKA, CA 95501