Preparing Missourians to Succeed:

A Blueprint for Higher Education

MISSOURI'S FUTURE depends on an educated citizenry. The private and public benefits of higher education are the building blocks of a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and a good quality of life for all Missourians.

During the past decade, Missouri has made significant progress in increasing access to higher education. Educators and policymakers have expanded postsecondary education programs, kept tuition increases low, and adopted proven initiatives that help students complete a two- or four-year college degree or a career or technical certificate.

More Missourians than ever before are earning a postsecondary credential; however, more must be done to provide all students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

"Good jobs" — defined by a 2015 report from Georgetown University's Center for Education and Workforce as positions that pay more than $53,000 a year — are leading the country's economic recovery and are being filled by college graduates. Of the 2.9 million "good jobs" added to the U.S. economy since 2010, about 2.8 million went to workers with at least a bachelor's degree. In contrast, "good jobs" filled by workers with a high school diploma or less have decreased by 39,000.

To help meet Missouri's growing higher education needs, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education has adopted a new coordinated plan for the state's postsecondary education system.

The plan, *Preparing Missourians to Succeed: A Blueprint for Higher Education*, focuses on five key goals and includes strategies to achieve each goal.

To view the full plan, visit dhe.mo.gov/blueprint.php.

Note: Game-changer strategies are denoted in italics.

Blueprint Goals

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Attainment

GOAL 1: Missouri will increase the proportion of working-age adults with high-quality, affordable postsecondary credentials to 60 percent by 2025.

BY 2018, MORE THAN 60 PERCENT of jobs in Missouri will require a degree or certificate. Currently, 50.6 percent of working-age adults in Missouri have a postsecondary credential, up from 48.3 percent in 2010.

To increase degree and certificate attainment, Missouri must improve college participation rates. After several years of record enrollment, the number of students attending college has decreased by 3.6 percent over the past five years. Missouri must attract more traditional students and adults, including veterans, to higher education and provide more education opportunities in the communities where they live and work.

The state also must increase college completion rates, which have remained fairly flat for more than a decade. In 2013, about 53 percent of first-time, full-time students at Missouri's public universities earned a four-year degree in six years, and about 37.7 percent of first-time, full-time students at the state's community colleges earned a two-year degree or transferred to a four-year school in three years.

Reducing the achievement gap for students who are underrepresented in higher education also is essential. In 2013, just over 26 percent of African American students and 43 percent of Hispanic students who were first-time, full-time college students completed a four-year degree in six years or completed a two-year degree or transferred to a four-year school in three years, compared to 52.2 percent for white students.

Improving postsecondary education attainment is crucial for Missouri to maintain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce and a good quality of life.

50.6%

Percentage of working-age adults in Missouri with a two- or four-year degree or career or technical certificate.

Strategies to improve attainment:

1.1

Implement new policies and initiatives that help all students earn a degree or certificate in less time and at less cost, while enabling graduates to enter the workforce sooner. Tactics:

- *Eliminate remedial education in favor of co-requisite models and similar proven methods.*
- *Develop clear and lower-cost pathways to degrees and certificates.*
- *Expand agreements to support the seamless transfer of academic credits.*
- *Expand alternative modes of delivery, including early-college programs, online, credit for prior learning, and competency-based education.*
- *Organize an information campaign to encourage students to seek full-time enrollment (defined here as 15 credit hours a semester).*

Missouri must improve college participation and completion rates and close the achievement gap for students who are underrepresented in higher education.

1.2

Establish a competitive grant program to help institutions transition to proven completion strategies that can assist Missouri in achieving its Big Goal for Higher Education.

1.3

Raise the postsecondary education participation rates of traditional students. Tactics:

- Increase efforts to assist students in completing college admissions and financial aid applications.
- Increase collaboration among higher education institutions and high schools to help students begin planning earlier for college and careers, with assistance from the state departments of higher education and elementary and secondary education.

1.4

Seek participation in flexible educational programs by adult students, including veterans; individuals seeking new job skills; and those with some college but no degree. Tactics:

- Make a concerted effort to increase the number of adult learners re-entering educational programs leading to the award of a postsecondary credential.
- Ensure working and place-bound students have adequate academic, career development and support services to complete a college credential.

1.5

Reduce disparities for students and faculty at Missouri's colleges and universities. Tactics:

- Raise completion rates by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and disability by 50 percent by 2025.
- Increase efforts to recruit and retain faculty that reflect the diversity of the state.

1.6

Encourage increased collaboration between education and business partners to provide students more opportunities for career exploration that will lead to improved completion and placement rates.

Affordability

GOAL 2: Missouri will rank among the 10 most affordable states in which to obtain a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025.

Although tuition increases at Missouri's public colleges and universities rank among the lowest in the nation, students still cite affordability as the number one reason they do not attend college.

WHILE TUITION INCREASES at Missouri's public colleges and universities have ranked among the lowest in the nation for the past several years, students continue to cite affordability as the number one reason they do not attend college or complete a post-secondary credential.

Currently, in-state tuition in Missouri — as a percentage of median family income — ranks 13th lowest in the nation for public four-year universities, 16th lowest for community colleges and 24th lowest for independent four-year institutions.

Limited state funding for higher education has impacted college affordability in Missouri. From 2000 to 2013, state funding per full-time student decreased by more than $1,400. In 2013, higher education funding per full-time student in Missouri was $4,655, compared to the national average of $6,172.

State financial aid has not kept up with need, although significant investments have been made to the Access Missouri Grant, Bright Flight Scholarship and A+ Scholarship programs. Access Missouri, the state's only grant based on student financial need, has been underfunded for a number of years, ranking Missouri 33rd among all states in providing need-based aid to students.

Increasing Missouri's investment in postsecondary education, improving the efficiency of the state's higher education system, and refining the administration of state financial aid programs could help make college more affordable for students in Missouri.

Strategies for keeping college affordable:

2.1

Convene a new state student financial aid task force to make recommendations for making the system more balanced, responsive and efficient in the use of state funds devoted to financial aid. The task force should include representation from the governor, the Missouri General Assembly, all postsecondary education sectors and the Department of Higher Education.

Note: The task force should evaluate the effectiveness of current programs, the balance between need-based and merit-based support for students, and the alignment of financial aid programs with identified state goals. The task force also should study the need for new or substantially revised existing programs designed to cover the cost for up to the first two years of postsecondary education at public community colleges and significantly reduce the tuition cost for students at all institutions, as well as incorporating sufficient flexibility and inclusiveness to respond to a variety of enrollment options, including online programs and early college courses for high school students.

2.2

Form a robust state-level work-study program designed to provide real-world job experience and promote skill development, including "essential skills" that are highly sought after in the workplace and in life.

2.3

Study the establishment of an "emergency aid" program for students experiencing sudden and unforeseen issues with financing costs beyond tuition and fees that threaten their ability to stay in school. Adopt best practices for establishing such programs at the institutional level.

2.4

Establish a Higher Education Trust Fund to create a stable, dedicated mechanism for making earlier student financial aid decisions consistent with the college cycle of applications, acceptance letters and financial aid award announcements. The trust fund would enable the governor and the Missouri General Assembly to set aside appropriated funds on a fiscal schedule that would make the financial aid award programs more efficient and predictable for students and families.

2.5

Implement a web-based student portal that will serve as a one-stop shop for information about higher education, including applications, FAFSA rules, state student aid eligibility, transfer policies, reverse transfer, transfer course library, and other information to help students plan for higher education and complete a degree in less time and at less cost.

2.6

Support initiatives to fund public higher education sufficiently to move "per full-time-equivalent student" funding to the national average.

2.7

Enlist private sector support to develop a public information campaign that emphasizes the necessary role families play in financing the cost of postsecondary education for their children. The campaign should highlight the tools available to assist them in meeting that challenge, including MOST (Missouri's 529 savings program), financial literacy programs and available sources of student financial assistance.

2.8

Recommend best practices for streamlining and/or combining common institutional functions across multiple public institutions in such areas as purchasing, human resources and IT systems, and develop a mechanism to highlight institutional progress in improving efficiencies.

70,000

Number of students attending Missouri postsecondary schools who received state financial aid during 2014–2015.

Quality

GOAL 3: Missouri will produce graduates with high-quality postsecondary degrees and certificates that are valuable and relevant to individuals, employers, communities and the state.

STUDENTS SHOULD GRADUATE from postsecondary education with a high-quality degree or certificate that is valuable and relevant and prepares them for the future.

Excellence in academic programs and skills courses must be measured by student learning outcomes, or what students know when they complete a degree or certificate. Many employers and educators agree that Missouri needs more college-educated workers who have both broad knowledge and field-specific or practical experience to succeed in the 21st century economy.

The quality of postsecondary programs can be enhanced through improving learning assessment methods and using the results to improve teaching, providing more hands-on and field-tested learning opportunities, and structuring postsecondary certificates so they are "stackable" and lead to further education and degree attainment as workers progress through their careers.

If Missouri is to achieve its higher education goals for growth and development, it will need to provide highly effective and efficient career and technical education (CTE) statewide; however, at present CTE in Missouri is balkanized. Some CTE occurs at the high-school level, through 57 Career and Technical Centers, and some is delivered through the state's community colleges and state technical college.

Strategies to achieve quality and excellence:

3.1

Encourage strong business-education partnerships to increase opportunities for students to engage in more individualized or "hands-on" learning experiences, such as unpaid and paid internships with business and industry, faculty-directed research, young entrepreneurship programs, service-learning and study abroad experiences.

3.2

Pursue establishment of a statewide quasi-independent non-profit P-20 council to align public policies and partners, collaborate with regional P-20 partnerships and inform key advocates of a seamless and functional system of education, consistent with the intent of Section 160.800, RSMo.

3.3

Support appointment of a blue-ribbon third-party panel to review Missouri's postsecondary education system — including governance and regulatory structures, efficiency, missions, adequacy of funding, selectivity policy — to assess how effectively the system is meeting the needs of stakeholders and make recommendations as appropriate.

Employers and educators agree that Missouri needs more college-educated workers who have both broad knowledge and field-specific experience to succeed in the 21st century.

3.4

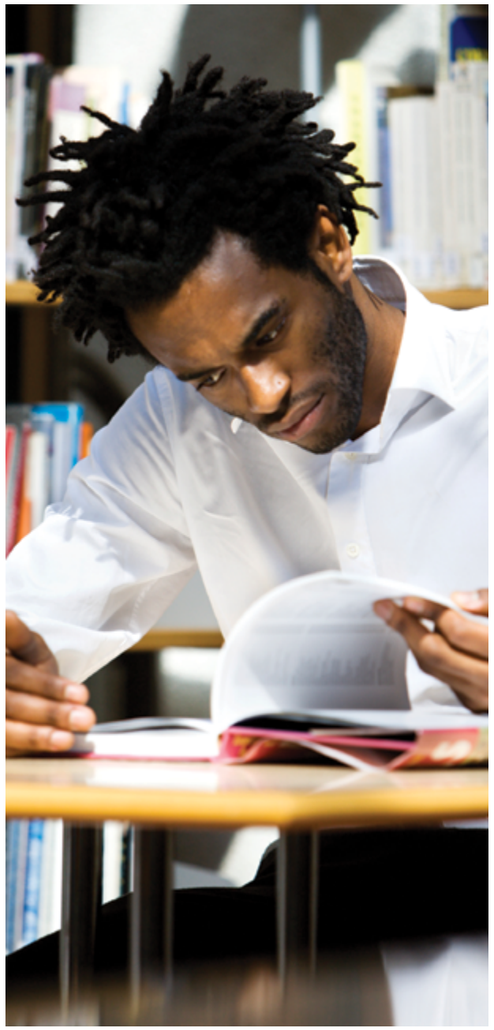
Encourage colleges and universities to enable faculty to achieve success in learning outcomes by maintaining the appropriate balance between full-time and contingent faculty and providing all faculty with appropriate professional development, expanded learning support and updated teaching resources, including technical support.

3.5

Support collaboration between the Missouri Department of Higher Education and colleges and universities to achieve higher levels of student learning outcomes through better assessment and more extensive use of assessment results. The ground work for this has been laid through Multistate Collaborative to Assess Student Learning Outcomes (MSC) initiative and the English Pilot Project (EPP).

3.6

Participate in a comprehensive review of Missouri's current system of career and technical education to affirm strengths and identify areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Review participants should include at a minimum the state departments of elementary and secondary education, higher education and economic development; public school districts; community colleges; and the state technical college.



Research & Innovation

GOAL 4: Missouri will be a top 10 state for investment in academic research by 2025.

Expanding Missouri's university-based research efforts will provide more students with valuable experience in the high-demand STEM fields and boost Missouri's economy.

WITH FLAGGING INVESTMENT and evolving global markets, the United States must double down on research to remain competitive. Missouri is in a position to help lead a national resurgence in research and innovation.

Missouri has built one of the strongest business-sector research engines in America's knowledge-intensive economy, ranking 10th in the nation for business-led research investment; however, the state currently ranks 18th for academic research investment. In 2010, approximately $944 million in research expenditures separated Missouri from ranking among the top 10 states.

Cutting-edge research at higher education institutions is essential to economic growth. The University of Missouri and Washington University in St. Louis, among others, are adept at taking research innovations to market. Success depends on sophisticated management and business acumen to develop a business model, raise capital and complete the transition to the marketplace.

Expanding Missouri's university-based research efforts will provide more students with valuable experience in the high-demand STEM fields and help boost Missouri's overall economic vitality.

18th

Missouri's ranking for academic research investment. Approximately $1.087 billion was invested in 2010.

Strategies to support increased research and innovation:

4.1

Foster an entrepreneurship culture by encouraging the integration of entrepreneurial internships, mentorships, community partnerships, projects, collaborative programs and incubators, and interdisciplinary and inter-institutional engagement into conventional academic pathways.

4.2

Create a pooled state and private sector matching fund to assist Missouri's colleges and universities in successfully pursuing federally sponsored research grants. A standing matching fund would better enable the state's researchers to "get in the game" when competing with other states for time-sensitive research grants.

4.3

Encourage collaboration between business and university sectors through flexible policies regarding IP ownership, especially IP arising from industry-funded research.

4.4

Develop a faculty-led research portal that connects researchers across institutions and departments whose diverse expertise, projects and resources may present opportunities for collaboration and greater access to federal, state, and private-sector research funding.

4.5

Coordinate statewide training events to help faculty and researchers navigate the process of technological and idea transfer from university laboratories to the marketplace.

4.6

Encourage incentives and recognition for university faculty and researchers who successfully transition laboratory innovations to publicly available products and services.

Investment, Advocacy & Partnerships

GOAL 5: Missouri will promote greater investment in a culture of postsecondary education through increased advocacy and powerful partnerships with education, business, government and communities.

REACHING MISSOURI'S higher education goals will require unprecedented public support, investment and collaboration among education, business and community leaders. Increasing postsecondary education attainment is a top priority for the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the Hawthorn Foundation and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The path to success runs through postsecondary education. Yet many of the best jobs in high-demand fields remain vacant due to a lack of qualified candidates, thus slowing economic growth.

While Missouri's investment in higher education declined for more than a decade, state funding has taken a positive turn in recent years. A statewide performance funding program rewards the state's colleges and universities for progress on measurable goals. State financial aid programs have received boosts, although the increases have not kept up with greater demand.

Missouri must do a better job of preparing individuals, including those in the state's poorest rural and urban areas, for the competitive job market of the future. The challenge lies in attracting students to higher education and keeping them in the real or virtual classroom until they have finished a program of study.

Viable state and regional partnerships are essential to the state's ability to transition more quickly to a college-going culture that can sustain significant growth and prosperity for all Missouri citizens. The groundwork has been laid for further collaboration among key partners — regional P-20 councils, business/education coalitions and innovation partnerships, state agencies, public school districts and community leaders. More leadership, better communication and a sense of urgency are needed to bring these strategies to scale.

Strategies for building a stronger culture of education and skill training through investment, advocacy and powerful partnerships:

5.1

Develop powerful partnerships with education, business, government and communities to strengthen the case for a strong system of higher education in Missouri. Tactics:

- *Form a Missouri Business and Education Coalition to advance a public agenda focused on education, skill training and jobs.*
- *Develop a broad-based communication strategy to promote a culture of educational attainment among our young people and their families and foster a sense of urgency about the need to make the hard investment decisions that will lead to quality educational opportunities for all. Seek private -sector support for the initiative.*

The path to success runs through postsecondary education. Reaching Missouri' higher education goals will require public support, investment and collaboration among education, business and community leaders.

5.2

Incent the private sector to provide broad support for initiatives that offer practical experience, mentoring programs and career advising. Tactics:

- Fund innovation grants to support programs geared to meet the state's educational attainment and skills training needs.
- Expand and enhance partnerships between postsecondary institutions and business and industry for delivering customized employer training and onsite workforce training.
- Engage employers to be mentors in the classroom and increase the number of students exposed to the workplace through paid internships, job shadowing, work study and other means. Develop pathways programs, such as the Missouri Innovation Campus or Pathways to Prosperity.

Vision

Missouri will be a national leader in providing high-quality postsecondary education that will equip Missourians with the personal and professional skills to succeed in the 21st century.

Mission

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education and the Missouri Department of Higher Education will collaborate with stakeholders to deliver a coordinated postsecondary education system that provides accessible, affordable and innovative education that supports economic growth, enhances civic engagement and improves the quality of life for all Missourians.

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For more information about the Blueprint for Higher Education, visit dhe.mo.gov/blueprint.php

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