

Goal 1: Strategy 2

Identify new, relevant academic programs and opportunities for expanding existing programs to meet projected workforce needs for the region, state and nation; and student interests

A. Introduction and Background



The current disruption in higher education (discussed in Strategy 1) creates opportunities for faculty and administrators at colleges and universities throughout the nation to develop and revise programs based on market research and to differentiate their campuses from peer institutions. In the state of Oklahoma, colleges and universities must address workforce needs as well as the state's top 100 occupations when developing new programs. At East Central University, we must also address the needs and interests of our long standing partners, such as the Chickasaw Nation and other regional employers. Finally, successful program development depends upon student demand.

The Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation include currency of programs. When RNL visited ECU in 2017-2018, one of our stated goals was to "grow domestic, first time, full time student population, to increase the Native American Student Population, and to become known as *the* regional institution." To accomplish this goal, we will need to identify new, relevant academic programs and opportunities to expand existing ones related to workforce needs and student interest. Historically, Program change at East Central University has been slow and it has not always been driven by data.

This strategy will include the following:

- a. We will conduct focus groups among our constituents during year one. We will listen, document, analyze, and use the information we learn to conduct feasibility studies for each program considered.
- b. We will seek, analyze, and use relevant data from various agencies during year one to determine path forward.
- c. We will identify our unique opportunities and pursue them during years two through five.
- d. We will work with The Learning House on an annual bases to make market market-driven decisions as new programs are developed and implemented
- e. We will work with university and industry stakeholders to implement an Engineering program that will have first cohort by Fall 2020
- f. We will seek creative solutions to expansion and serving the needs of our students through needs analyses and focus groups.

B. Contribution to Other Goals

Goal 2: Enrollment management

Goal 5: Leverage resources to achieve mission, vision and goals

C. Specific Actions, Elements, Steps and Timelines

Spring 2019 – committee made up of people from across campus with the appropriate expertise conducts focus groups with community members and prospective students. Provost and Deans meet with leadership of the Chickasaw Nation and other local employers to discuss their needs.

Fall 2019 – departments begin curricular work based upon what we have learned from focus groups and conversations with employers, mindful of data from BLS, OESC and the top 100 jobs list.

Engineering? What's the plan?

Spring 2019 – Provost names and charges task force to explore the role of branch campuses

D. Potential Models and Useful Information

<https://www.okhighered.org/reachhigher/docs/critical-occupations.pdf>

<https://www.ok.gov/oesc/documents/lmstatewideoccproj1424.pdf>

<https://www.bls.gov>