

Delta College
Board of Trustees Dinner Meeting
Delta College N7
Tuesday, September 9, 2025
5:30 pm

Board Present: A. Baldwin, A. Clark, S. Gannon, B. Handley-Miller, D. Middleton, M. Nash, A. Thomas

Board Absent: M. Rowley, M. Wood

Others Present: W. Awad, R. Battinkoff, T. Brown, W. Burns, R. Curry, C. DeEulis, L. Dull, J. Foco, M. Gavin, L. Govitz, D. Hopkins, T. Johnroe, K. Kiste-Toner, G. Luczak, J. Perry, S. Raube, S. Roche, K. Schuler, A. Ursuy, R. Young

Press Present: None

Board Chair, S. Gannon, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. She turned the meeting over to Andrea Ursuy, Executive Director of Administrative Services and Institutional Effectiveness. A. Ursuy began with an overview of the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. She stated that the College launched its current 4-year strategic plan in 2023, following a Board-approved planning process that began in 2022 and engaged nearly 200 employees. The plan is built on the College's mission, vision, and values, and is halfway through its implementation. It is guided by four strategic pillars: Student Engagement, Retention, and Completion; People Focus; Community Centered; and Social Impact. The College's budget is aligned annually to support these priorities.

Delta's 4-phase planning process connects broad strategic initiatives with specific institutional action projects and the unit review process to guide work under each pillar. Progress is measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)—enrollment, course success, retention, and completion—set at the start of the plan to track achievement by its conclusion. Planning at Delta has emphasized making strategic plans actionable rather than symbolic. *The Way Forward* succeeds through the following:

- a Super Teams approach that aligns related action projects under academic and student services teams to foster collaboration;
- a unit planning and review process that links departmental projects to strategic goals;
- a strong focus on completion and equity, recognized by the Higher Learning Commission; and
- a culture of data-driven decision-making, supported by Tableau and a new college-wide data literacy series.

Reva Curry, Vice President of Instruction and Learning Services, stated that Delta's work is highly collaborative, involving nearly every area of the college—academic deans, coordinators, faculty, finance, institutional advancement, institutional research, and human resources—to align resources like funding, staffing, scheduling, equipment, and scholarships. Community support initiatives also play a role. All efforts ultimately center on one priority: ensuring students' needs are met and supporting their success.

Academics use the class schedule as a key tool to improve access, retention, and completion. Efforts focus on strengthening motivation, reducing wait times, and helping students finish faster, while working closely with partners like SES to incorporate the student voice.

The college held 3,600 class sections last year, with over 1,600 scheduled for this fall alone, including high-demand courses in English, biology, math, computer science, and social sciences. Faculty coordinators and associate deans work together to build a strategic schedule across multiple campuses, ensuring classes are offered at the right times and locations to meet student needs. Scheduling is reviewed three times a year, focusing not only on the top 30 high-demand courses but also the top 50–100 to support timely completion. In addition, a new committee is piloting ways to simplify and clarify the college-going process by streamlining five programs as models to reduce student confusion and improve pathways.

R. Curry shared a chart showing the section count over the past five years. The number of class sections has steadily grown, with 1,630 scheduled for the current fall term. Across fall, winter, and spring, of last year, the total was almost 3,600 sections.

In addition to scheduling, the College supports students through e-Learning, the Library, and the Teaching Learning Center (T/LC) across all campuses, including the downtown centers, to ensure consistency. Services are offered both in-person and online, with a new pilot adding online tutoring during evenings, weekends, and holidays to expand access when staff are unavailable. Library use has steadily increased since COVID, with students primarily coming to study in quiet spaces or receive tutoring. The library also manages distribution of laptops, calculators, and lab kits. These services, along with expanding support at the downtown center locations, drive consistent student traffic and provide essential academic resources.

Tutoring support services track usage by student visits, with repeated sessions linked to improved grades. About 2,000 students accessed tutoring in 2023–2024, an increase of around 100 from prior years. A new strategy includes faculty holding office hours in the tutoring center. Tutoring is gaining visibility, supporting student engagement, and online tutoring services are also being developed. The Writing Support Service assists students with paper assignments, with over 5% of the student population using it. Students often return multiple times for help on drafts and revisions. Strong usage was seen last year, and growth is a goal moving forward. The service also extends support to high school partners through collaboration and shared expertise.

Faculty play a key role in advancing Strategic Initiatives 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 through collaboration and leadership. The Faculty Center for Teaching and Excellence supports professional development, shares encouragement through its weekly newsletter, and runs a unique year-long new faculty orientation. Faculty also lead efforts in online learning, open educational resources - saving students \$3 million, and strategies to engage every student.

Shelly Raube, Vice President of Student Empowerment and Success, shared that Delta is being intentional about ensuring all offices are equity-focused and student-centered. Recent successes include enrollment growth—each semester exceeded projections by about 10%, reflecting collective efforts from enrollment teams, faculty, and staff. This coordination highlights the institution's impact on students and its strong performance above projections. Another area of growth is digital engagement, with the rebranded MyDelta platform expanding student access and navigation four times in a year. Ongoing initiatives remain centered on retention and completion, reinforcing the College's mission.

The College is focused on improving fall-to-fall retention by emphasizing momentum milestones, particularly students earning 24 credits in their first year, which strongly correlates with higher retention. In the most recent cohort, 50.6% achieved this benchmark, up from 41% the prior winter.

Efforts include advising support, encouraging continuous enrollment, and helping students—especially older or part-time learners—stay on track through course planning, basic needs support, and tailored guidance. The goal is to sustain student momentum, strengthen retention, and expand completion rates through coordinated initiatives across advising and student services.

The advising team is structured into three fields—health and wellness, business and technology, and science and math—so advisors can specialize and better support students. Efforts are underway to strengthen student-advisor connections, reduce self-advising, and expand advising at off-campus centers. The student support system, revised in 2023, continues to be improved with tools like auto-attendance alerts, proactive outreach, and faculty/staff feedback surveys. Work is also being done to allow students to self-refer for help, complementing faculty and staff referrals. With high referral volumes, coordination with the T/LC and academic support services remains essential, supported by a dedicated committee including faculty.

The financial aid office continues to manage rising demand and regulatory changes, processing over 10,800 FAFSAs this year—set to surpass prior years. Collaboration with auxiliary services and finance led to innovative support, such as allowing students to use financial aid for dining cards to address food insecurity, with nearly \$31,000 spent in one semester. Overall, the College awarded \$7 million more in aid than the previous year. The financial aid team remains dedicated to ensuring students have the resources they need to remove financial barriers to success.

Strategic Initiative 3.2 focuses on removing barriers for students by expanding support systems. Peer-to-peer mentoring has been successful, giving students a safe space to share challenges with peers rather than faculty or staff. The Collegiate Recovery Education and Wellness (CREW) Program has supported 2,000 students impacted by addiction, while access to UWill mental health services continues to grow—119 students engaged last year, doubling prior use. Some 48% of students expressed a need for mental health support, underscoring the importance of investing in resources that students will actually use. These efforts help ensure diverse student groups feel seen, supported, and more likely to seek help.

To address student barriers, the Coordinated Care Network (CCN) provides direct support through a full-time social worker who manages emergency grants (up to \$500 per student), builds community partnerships, and connects students to resources. The network coordinates with counseling, disability services, and career/technical education, while also expanding peer-to-peer support for specific groups like the Women Inclusion Network.

The College is strengthening completion pathways through reverse transfer, certificate auto-awards, policy improvements, and debt-relief pilots. In 2024, 574 transcripts were received through reverse transfer, leading to 154 degrees awarded—helping students who may never finish a bachelor's to still earn a credential. Work is underway to auto-award certificates tied to associate degrees, ensuring no missed opportunities for students. Academic progress policies were streamlined to make the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals clearer and more student-friendly. The debt forgiveness pilot supports returning students with past debt, offering up to \$1,500 in debt forgiveness with completion coaching; two students are currently enrolled. Together, these efforts remove barriers, increase degree attainment, and support students in persisting toward completion.

Retention, completion, and engagement are strengthened through dual enrollment and cross-departmental collaboration. Dual enrollment processes have been streamlined, reducing multiple

different payment methods to one unified system, improving early alerts and student success awareness. This led to an 11.5% increase in dual enrollment (18,999 credits), with 483 students maintaining a GPA above 3.0, 31 earning associate degrees, and a 17% increase in MTA eligibility from dual students. The college has 140 agreements with 37 high schools and ISDs, generating 3,621 credits this term. Outreach efforts through the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) reached 1,076 students, with 41% enrolling at Delta. Broader initiatives emphasize national collaboration, integrated communication systems, and a unified student experience through platforms like My Delta, which recently received a national award.

Jon Foco, Vice President of Business and Finance, stated that about two years ago, a strategic process was implemented to align budget spending with the College's Strategic Initiatives and pillars. Divisions must request funding, specifying the initiative, pillar, and expected outcomes, which is tracked in a central database. Over the first two years, roughly \$400,000 was allocated, mostly for one-time expenses and personnel (faculty, part-time staff, and support for financial aid). This process allows the College to monitor where funds are used, prioritize ongoing needs, and ensure resources support student growth and institutional goals effectively.

Finally, Mike Gavin, Delta College President, noted that the strategic plan has introduced new data-driven practices across scheduling, budgeting, and student support to improve efficiency and student success. Resources were reallocated to hire more faculty and maintain advisor ratios (goal: 300 students per advisor; 1,000 per financial aid advisor) and to focus tutoring on the top 30 high-demand courses while still serving other areas. Budget projections for 2025–2026 are on track, and course success remains steady despite an increase in accelerated classes and expanded spring/summer offerings. Retention is improving within targeted cohorts, even as overall student volume grows, and completion rates have risen from 14–16% to around 10% higher, with ongoing work to enhance equity and reach future goals.

There being no further business, the dinner meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Talisa Brown, Assistant Board Secretary

Andrea Ursuy, Board Secretary