

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2025**

2020-2021

**MID-YEAR
ASSESSMENT
HIGHLIGHTS**



...providing life-changing opportunities through education.

Mid-Year Assessment 2020-2021

Executive Summary

The 2020-2021 Mid-Year Assessment is a first look at progress of the first year in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The Assessment includes a mid-year review of quantitative and qualitative data. In many areas, it is premature to draw conclusions from data gathered only months into the five-year cycle. In addition to few months of implementation, multiple planned actions have been altered or postponed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

However, Ozarka officials are committed to continual assessment to monitor performance and progress as well as make necessary adjustments in response to ever-changing needs and circumstances. While it is evident that COVID-19 has had an impact on College enrollment and retention nation-wide, Ozarka strives to keep students on track academically.



Access to Education



Student Success



Workforce Development



Continuous Innovation



Community Engagement

Priority One - Access to Education

Enrollment Management

The College's strategic approach to enrollment management represents much of the first two Strategic Plan priorities. In the mid-year assessment two common themes emerge:

- (a) assessments are premature for any conclusive findings in the current cycle, and
- (b) almost no priority, strategy, goal, or action has been immune to the impact of COVID-19.

- **Increase Number of Service Area High School Graduates Enrolled**

The Access team seeks to increase enrollment of area high school graduates by 10% from a three-year baseline of 202 to 222 by the end of AY2021-22. Only months into the current planning cycle, the Ozarka experienced further decline with the first recorded semester representing a 10% decrease for area graduates.

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
11-School Service Area Enrollment	212	184	209	183

- **Increase Applicant to Enrollee Ratio**

Ozarka has had success maintaining an applicant to enrollee ratio of at least 50%. The Access team has set a new goal to increase the applicant to enrollee ratio to 55% by the end of AY2021-22. Most recent fall data reveals a slight decline to a ratio of 49%.

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
A:E Ratio	56%	52%	52%	49%

- **Increase the number of Students New to Institution**

The Access team saw a noticeably lower number in the spring of 2020 compared to previous cycles and unattributable to the pandemic. The College seeks to increase the number of new students by 10% over the three-year baseline from 171 to 188 by spring 2022. Spring 2021 data showed further decline.

<u>Spring Semester</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
New to Institution	175	181	158	12

Priority One - Access to Education

- **Grow Enrollment in both Technical and Transfer Degrees**

Ozarka seeks to increase overall enrollment and the Access team has chosen to track efforts and progress for technical and transfer pathways separately.

Ozarka has eight degree pathways for transfer with an average three-year baseline of 343 students. The College aims to increase enrollment by 5% to an average of 360 students by fall 2022. Fall enrollment in transfer degrees was 265 for 2020-21, bringing the new average to 311.

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Transfer Enrollment	360	342	327	265
3YR Average			343	311

Ozarka has 12 technical degree pathways and the most recent three-year fall enrollment average is 362 students. The current enrollment of students in technical degree programs is 341 for AY 2020-21. The College is taking a targeted approach to individual programs to increase enrollment by 5% to an average of 380 students by fall 2020.

<u>Fall Semester</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Technical Enrollment	345	321	422	424
3YR Average			362	389

Priority One Assessment

Overall, the mid-year assessment data shows a bleak outlook for enrollment; however, two overarching themes persist. First, only six months into the five-year planning cycle, there has not been sufficient time to implement the action plan. Second, no Access to Education activity has been immune to the impact of the ongoing COVID pandemic, resulting in significant adjustments to our plan of action. College officials are confident that as conditions return to normal, responsible persons will resume planned activities. It is also acknowledged that the other side of the pandemic may look slightly different as some activities (e.g., modes of engagement and methods of teaching) may never fully return to the way they were previously.

Priority Two - Student Success

Improve Semester Completion

A key component to overall strategic enrollment management, improving semester completion remains a strong priority for overall Student Success and, specifically, progress toward academic and career goals.

- **Successful Academic Alerts**

Research maintains that early intervention is key to keeping students on-track to completion. Faculty and staff advisors utilize Academic Alerts to aid in student success. The College has a goal of increasing the number of successful Academic Alerts for the academic year by 10% by the end of AY2021-22. The current number of successful Academic Alerts for fall 2020 is 88. The total from spring 2021 will be added to get the total for AY2020-21. Progress is on track to improve in 2021 despite the pandemic enrollment adjustment and well on path to meet the 10% goal in 2022.

<u>Yearly Totals</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Successful Alerts	97	118	119	88*
*mid-year total				

- **D, F that Finished with an A, B, or C**

By the end of AY2022, the College seeks to increase the rate at which students with a D or F at midterm finish the semester successfully by 5%. Based on a three-year average it will increase the average from 24% to 29%. The graph below shows that fall 2020 was at 25%, a slight increase from 24%, despite current conditions and is on track to reach the goal.

<u>Fall Success</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Success after D, F Midterm	26%	25%	20%	25%

Priority Two - Student Success

Increase Semester-to-Semester Persistence

The College was successful at maintaining at least a 60% on-time progression through AY2019-20. The Success committee chose to continue focus on retention, with plans to track both fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall rates.

- **Fall-to-Spring Retention**

The Clearinghouse reported the national average for fall-to-spring retention rates in AY2019-20 among public two-year institutions was 62%. Ozarka had a rate of 63% for the same reporting period. The graph below shows the rate for AY2020-21 is 63% the same as AY2019-20. While it is evident COVID-19 has likely had an impact on retention, the College appears to be holding steady and still on track to increase the fall-to-spring rate by 5% to 68% by the end of AY2021-22.

<u>Retention</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>
Fall-to-Spring	59%	65%	63%	63%

- **Fall-to-Fall Retention**

The most recent Clearinghouse report in 2019-20 showed that the national average for fall-to-fall retention among public two-year institutions was 54%. Ozarka had a rate of 51% for the same reporting period. The College set a goal to increase the fall-to-fall rate by 5% to 56% by the end of AY2021-22. There is no data to pull until fall 2021 to assess the retention rate for Fall 2020. However, responsible parties are committed to continue the activities planned to improve these rates.

Priority Two Assessment

Overall, the mid-year assessment data shows modest improvement in spite of the ongoing pandemic. These findings suggest that although the COVID-related impact lies with enrollment, generally, it has not affected the College's ability to implement key strategies to retain the students who did enroll. Further, even with major adjustments to academic delivery and modes of engagement, the College is still making strides with retention and suggests the action plan is working.

Priority Three - Workforce Development

- **Explore Short Term Training Opportunities**

Building upon the recent development of multiple shorter-term training paths (e.g., stackable certificates), responsible persons have continued to advance short-term opportunities with offerings evident in the following ways:

- Expansion of training certificates (e.g., welding, diesel, and machining).
- Inclusion of additional industry-recognized credentials (e.g., Future Fit and OSHA)

- **Enhance Advisory Board Affiliations**

Ozarka Academics has added advisory boards with its newest technical program offerings (e.g., diesel technology). Ozarka has also established a regional workforce alliance to meet the objectives of its recently awarded federal Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) grant.

- **Continue to Enhance Career Awareness and Placement Opportunities**

The College is maintaining communication with area employers to identify and develop industry-informed programs and certifications to increase career placement opportunities. Ozarka is currently leveraging career development/placement resources inside the College (e.g., Perkins) and outside in the region (e.g., DWS, employers).

A key element of the aforementioned WORC initiative, the CTC director and technical program faculty are strengthening partnerships with local industries to develop work-based learning experiences for students while they complete their studies.

Priority Three Assessment

Overall, the mid-year assessment of Priority Three suggests solid progress toward plan goals and activities. Although other priority areas have been significantly impacted, Ozarka has made significant advances in Workforce Development early in the planning cycle. Much of the continued progress can be attributed to new WORC grant objectives and a commitment to employer and industry outreach even amidst pandemic-adjusted modes of contact.

Priority Four - Continuous Innovation

- **Promote Effective Communication**

Ozarka officials understand the importance of effective communication both internally and externally. With the uncertainties of COVID and the pandemic response, the College has committed to undertake deliberate efforts to improve communications:

- Expanded the use of social media platforms, newsletters and press releases for more effective communication within and beyond the institution.
- Information Systems launched a new website on January 1, 2021. The new website is mobile friendly with many updated features for all site visitors.

- **Faculty Professional Development**

Academics leadership is on track to complete a sound development plan for faculty by the end of AY 2021. Plans will include budget allotment as well as pandemic contingency opportunities.

- **Utilize and Enhance Ozarka Technologies**

Information Systems (IS) continues to pursue efficient solutions for the everyday business of the College. Though the pandemic has required significant pivoting in activities for IS, here are highlights of the current action plan:

- Business office completes first full year using completely paperless purchasing.
- Multiple upgrades to My.Ozarka LMS platform during transition to distance learning
- Significant infrastructure upgrades in classrooms for instructional needs brought on by pandemic (e.g., GoPro cameras, video-editing booth)
- CIO updated online giving form for Foundation payments.
- Academic Assessment system updates are on track for AY2022.
- Development of a COVID monitoring system with enhanced features for contact tracing and quarantine tracking.

- **Celebrate Ozarka College Innovations**

Ozarka College remains committed to celebrating exceptional work and the generation of new ideas and continually cites innovation in education. Mid-year update includes:

- The College has made additional efforts to recognize the remarkable response made by staff, faculty, and students in the face of the COVID crisis.

Priority Four - Continuous Innovation

- **Explore Grant Opportunities**

A result of flattened state-funding, a constantly evolving sector, everchanging community needs, and most recently, COVID related adjustments to learning methods, the College is committed to seeking additional and external funding streams. Mid-year update includes:

- Received \$1.47M US DOL/Delta Regional Authority grant to develop a regional workforce alliance, stand up new programs at the Carpenter Technical Center in Ash Flat (Welding and Machining), and will support workforce readiness for student participants.
- Received \$180K to support industry-recognized workforce solutions (e.g., Future Fit program).
- Applied for Perkins Reserve Funding for advanced equipment to support technical programs.
- Secured \$200K+ in private donations and grants to furnish and equip the Carpenter Technical Center.

Ozarka staff will continue to explore grants for new initiatives, both large and small (e.g., Title III Strengthening Institutions Program and local Community Foundation grants).

- **Identify Energy Efficiency Solutions**

Ozarka continues to pursue energy efficient options for its physical resources. A primary goal for the College is to improve energy efficiency by converting to LED fixtures throughout its footprint. Mid-year update includes:

- Hall building ballasts have been replaced Fall 2020.
- Lecture hall at Ash Flat campus will be converted by summer 2021.

Priority Four Assessment

Similar to Workforce Development priority progress, Ozarka has made significant strides toward reaching Priority Four-Continuous Innovation goals. Overall, the Priority activities have either been unaffected or, moreover, expedited by the pandemic. In multiple instances, the immediate needs spurred by the pandemic advanced College innovation (e.g., instructional technologies, grant-making, effective communication). The evidence presented suggests the College has made much progress early in the planning cycle for Priority Four.

Priority Five Community Engagement

Foster Mutually Supportive Relationships

Community engagement and relationship-building are vital to Ozarka College and will continue to be a priority as allowed by COVID-19 guidelines. The overarching themes presented in the mid-year assessment suggest the real impact on all levels of engagement during the course of the pandemic. Priority five

- **Maximize Continuing Education Opportunities**

Ozarka Academics continues to talk to area communities and to develop ideas to maximize program-driven and industry-driven continuing education (CE) opportunities. Updates:

- Campus directors have increased engagement with area industries to develop critical partnerships for Ozarka's newest programs and, in doing so, serve as the point of contact for additional CE options in the communities they represent.
- CTC director and program faculty have connected with multiple industry partners to assemble a new regional workforce alliance in connection with the WORC initiative.

- **Continue to Encourage Civic Club Engagement**

Due to pandemic imposed restrictions, College officials are striving to stay engaged as permissible by restrictions.

Expand Summer Camp Opportunities

Ozarka continues to explore and add summer camps for programs, beginning with those that were planned for Summer 2020 but deferred due to COVID restrictions (e.g., Agriculture, Automotive, Culinary Arts and Welding). As COVID-19 restrictions ease, Ozarka will continue to explore summer camp opportunities by program in order to reach a broader range of students to get them in the pipeline.

Priority Five - Community Engagement

Institutionalize Community Health Fair Event

Due to COVID-19 the College realizes now more than ever the importance of health care in our communities. Ozarka continues to monitor pandemic restrictions so we can establish a rotating schedule for community health fair events for our service area as soon as possible.

Maintain a greater Presence at High School and Community Events

Most activities in 2020-21 have been canceled or gone virtual due to COVID-19 state and federal guidelines. College representatives continue to participate as allowed in various events and activities in support of our local communities and high schools where Ozarka presence is important.

Priority Five Assessment

Community engagement continues to be a priority for the institution. Overall, Priority Five goals and strategies seem most affected by the ongoing pandemic and health guidelines. College officials are confident as restrictions ease and members of its team can participate safely, Ozarka will resume its strong commitment to engagement and community presence with a deliberate action plan.