



1866



RUST COLLEGE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022  2025



I am so honored to have the opportunity to serve my alma mater as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. For many years, the Rust College Board has worked to preserve our institution which has made such a difference in the lives of so many for 155 years. As the landscape around us changes, so too must our beloved Rust College. We present this strategic plan as the roadmap for building on the legacy that so many have guarded for years. I look forward to working with the board, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of Rust to bring this vision and strategy to fruition.

Thank you for your support.

Cecelia Sawyer

Chair, Board of Trustees

I am grateful to the Board of Trustees for giving me the opportunity to serve as leader at Rust College. One of my most important responsibilities is to lead the strategic planning effort in conjunction with the board of trustees. We developed an extensive and impactful plan with the assistance of a blue ribbon steering committee and the support and guidance of Rust College faculty and staff. I look forward to working with each of you to continue our mission of equipping and inspiring students for excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world.

Ivy R. Taylor, Ed.D.

President





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Acknowledgments

This plan was authored by Dr. Adriane Johnson-Williams of Standpoint Consulting and Shannon MB Dixon of Shannon MB Dixon Consulting under the expert guidance of the Rust College Strategic Planning Steering Committee, consisting of Rust College executive leadership, faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and community stakeholders.

RUST LEADERSHIP

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COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Kelvin Buck (Mayor of Holly Springs), Dr. Antonio Burt (Shelby County Schools), Steve Gresham (President of Bank of Holly Springs), Dr. Cynthia A. Bond Hopson (The Black College Fund and Ethnic Concerns & The United Methodist Church), Dr. Albert Mosley (Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare), Christy Owens (Holly Springs Main Street Chamber), Dr. Stephon Redmond (United Methodist Church), and Dr. Kenneth Williams (Alliance Healthcare)



WHEN WE ALL
VOTE

ΚΑΨ
ΚΑΡΡΑ ΑΛΦΑ ΨΙ
Founded 1911

Rust's History as a Foundation



Founded in 1866 by a group of Northern Methodist Episcopal Church missionaries called the Freedman's Aid Society, Rust College is one of only 10 HBCUs founded before 1868 still operating. Rust was founded to educate freed slaves and other African Americans who were denied formal education; including adults of all ages and children (with a high school functioning until 1953). Initial instruction focused on elementary subjects with high school and college classes added as student learning progressed. In 1924 Rust installed its first African-American president, Dr. M.S. Davage.

The College holds fast to its civil rights origins and purpose. From voter registration drives in the mid-60s to the establishment of the Ida B. Wells-Barnett Social Justice Center to the celebration and promotion of Black culture through festivals, fine arts performances, lecture series, and its own radio and TV station, Rust continues this legacy.

Notable Rust alumni include Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the early civil rights leader, educator, and investigative journalist who spent her life combating prejudice and violence against Black Americans; Alexander Preston Shaw, the first African American Bishop of the Methodist Church; Ruby Elzy, the international operatic soprano and actress famous for her portrayal of Serena in *Porgy and Bess*; Anita Ward, the singer and musician best known for the chart topping song "Ring My Bell"; and Eddie Lee Smith Jr., the first African American mayor of Holly Springs.

The A'Capella Choir was started in the early 1930s by a Rust College graduate, Miss Natalie Doxey. The choir has traveled the world with a five-country tour including South Africa and across Europe. They performed at two World's Fairs and have received numerous awards.

The Rustian Renaissance

Rust College is in the midst of a renaissance - a transformation of culture, processes, partnerships, and performance. We are anchored in our history and purpose, while realizing the urgency of now. No student can wait while we trod the path of improvement. We must strive to realize the promise of this historically Black college for every student. It is a moral imperative.

Rust has new leadership, a President and leaders in every unit of the college. While our leaders honor the traditions, they are motivated by the need for pressing transformation. Like many small, liberal arts colleges, Rust faces great competition for students. This competition doesn't allow for slow, incremental change. Rather it calls for, and every student deserves, nothing short of a renaissance.

Moving out of a transition period, our leaders (guided by our stakeholders - faculty, alumni, students, and community members) developed this plan to fearlessly meet our mission, visions, and values.

MISSION

Rust College equips and inspires students for excellence in service in their communities and throughout the world.

VISION

Our vision reflects an institution of learning, inside and outside of the classroom. Students will prepare for careers while studying in an environment that nurtures academic and personal development.

We Are

A historically Black, liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church which was founded in 1866 by the Freedmen's Aid Society.



A student-centered college where everyone is committed to the success of all students.



A college that recognizes the threefold functions of education as teaching, research, and community service, with its primary mission as teaching.



A college with dynamic and excellent programs designed to support the cultural, moral, and spiritual development of our students.



A college grounded in its legacy and commitment to social justice.

Rust's Vital Partner—The United Methodist Church

Methodism in Mississippi was born alongside Rust College. The college was founded in part to support the education of church officers. The United Methodist Church has been a consistent financial supporter of college and served as a recruitment partner by spreading the word about Rust and providing scholarships. Rust maintains a Methodist chaplain who provides ecumenical student support and community building. The College is one of few that still identifies closely with the United Methodist Church by displaying the church's cross and flame in its marketing.



The Planning Process

The Steering Committee used a Results Based process, a method that ensures all plan elements are oriented to achieve the intended result. The Steering Committee was composed of Rust's executive leadership, trustees, faculty, students, parents, staff, alumni, and community and business leaders. Steering Committee members adapted the recently revised mission statement as the core of the College's results statement, which guided the Steering Committee throughout the process.

RESULT STATEMENT

All students who enroll in Rust College graduate equipped and inspired toward excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world.

Informed by stakeholder input, sessions were held with each stakeholder group listed above. Additionally, plans created by Rust leadership prior to the start of and during the planning process were included, as appropriate. In short, this plan was created using perspectives and informed opinions from a wide-variety of stakeholders, along with best practices from higher education.

Accreditation

Rust College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools--Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award Associate and Baccalaureate degrees. This plan was developed in accordance with SACSCOC accreditation standards on institutional planning and effectiveness and reinforces the College's commitment to systemic institution-wide planning. This plan will support each unit within the College as leaders establish aligned unit-level plans with performance targets.

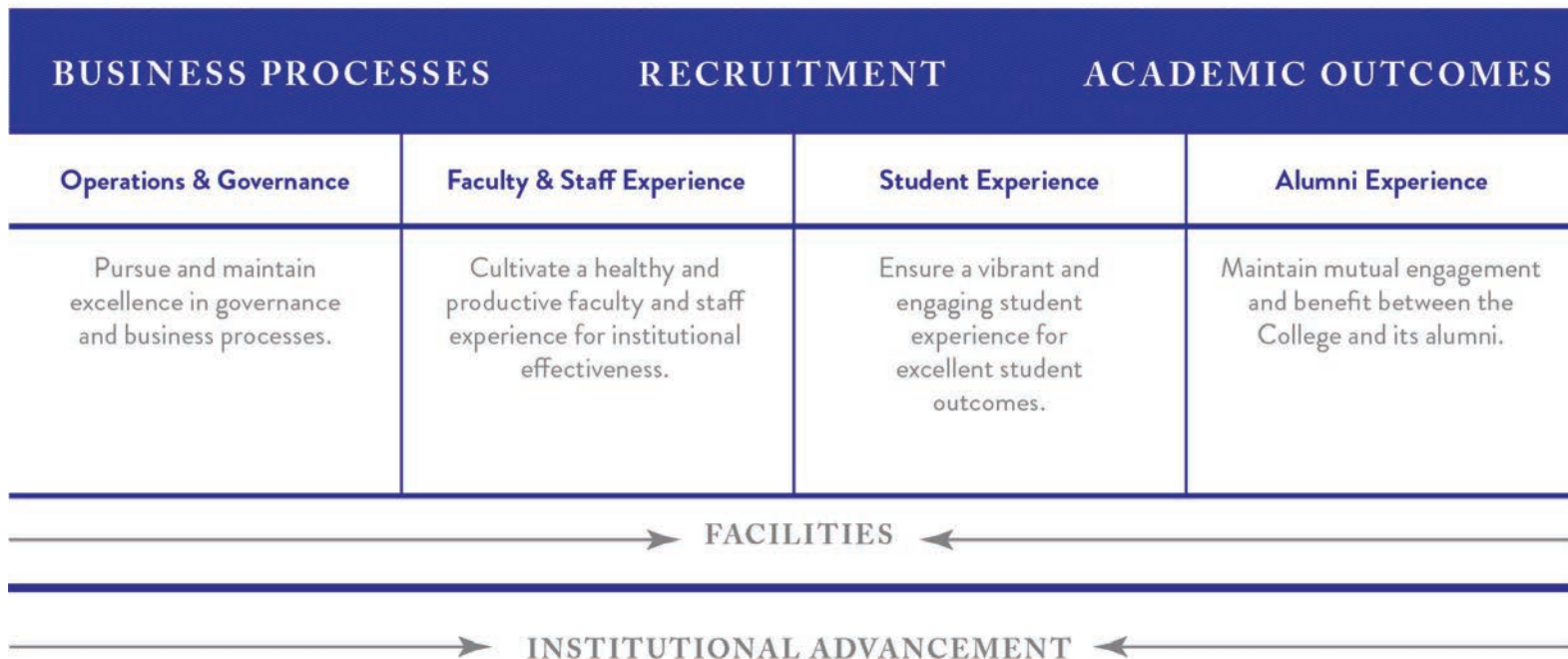


Three Factors, Four Strategies

This plan addresses three fundamental factors- improving *business processes*, *recruitment*, and *academics*. Every barrier to the result or facilitator of the result identified by Rust stakeholders pointed to one or more of these elements in the life of the College. Committing to four strategic areas (or pillars) will ensure that all students who enroll in Rust College graduate equipped and inspired toward excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world. The pillars are *student experience*, *faculty experience*, *alumni experience*, and *operations and governance*. The four pillars must be supported by the proper foundation - improvements in *facilities* and *institutional advancement*.



All students who enroll in Rust College graduate equipped and inspired toward excellence and service in their communities and throughout the world.




Measuring Results

The primary indicator of success for a small, liberal arts college is measured by the 4-year graduation rate. That is the measure toward which all others must be aligned. Standard measures for higher education for which Rust College will be responsible to federal and state agencies and which will serve as leading indicators for the 4-year graduation rate include enrollment, retention, and the types and sources of financial aid in relationship to need. All the other measures in this section are the performance measures that will signal the level of progress the College is making.



OUTCOME INDICATORS BASED ON RESULTS STATEMENTS

Operations & Governance	Faculty & Staff Experience	Student Experience	Alumni Experience
Board best practices; faculty planning & assessment; technology adoptions	% rating the College good and excellent place to work	Retention rate; graduation rate; post-graduation placement rate	% alumni giving; # of alumni participating in student recruitment and support
<p>All board members and faculty fulfill their governance, planning, and assessment roles.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>All constituents experience a professional and smooth operation.</p>	All faculty and staff feel valued and respected and perform at their very best.	All students engage fully in their academic pursuits and feel connected to the College community.	All alumni feel appreciated by and connected to the College.

Clear accessible performance measures are critical to successful plan implementation. Also vital are the processes for building and monitoring work plans as well as having easy-to-use and comprehensive digital tools for data gathering and analysis.

The above diagram shows the performance measures and results statements for each strategic area. Each Rust unit will annually develop unit-based work plans

and use an accreditation platform to track progress and support the assessment needed to guide continuous improvement.

The table below, drills down further into measures for each strategic area and on the two foundational elements - facilities and institutional advancement. The timeline indicates when the component should be completed or fully implemented for ongoing

management and measurement. It is recommended that the College use the 2021-2022 academic year to establish a baseline, set targets during the summer of 2022, and begin tracking performance measures during the 2022-2023 academic year.

OPERATIONS & GOVERNANCE

COMPONENTS	MEASUREMENTS	TIMELINE
Board alignment with governance best practices	Board giving Meeting attendance Action commitments fulfilled	2021-2022
Faculty self-governance, planning, and assessment	Annual institutional plan and targets	2021-2022
Stable ERP with trained staff	Errors in data collection Data available for planning and assessment	2021-2023
Institutional technology upgrade and increased usage	Age of hardware and software Tech integration in general operations	2021-2023
Staff training to maximize ERP usage and effectiveness	Staff cross-trained on ERP Student-faculty satisfaction with College processes	2021-2023

FACULTY & STAFF EXPERIENCE

COMPONENTS	MEASUREMENTS	TIMELINE
Ensure competitive compensation	Gap between Rust wages and peer/near institutions	2021-2024
Integrate faculty and staff input into annual planning	Faculty and staff feeling included in decision making	2021-ongoing
Provide faculty time and resources to develop as scholars and teachers	FSSE growth scores Faculty reporting job satisfaction	2021-ongoing

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

COMPONENTS	MEASUREMENTS
Healthy town and gown relationship	Partnerships for i connections from Participation from Participation from campus initiatives
First Year Experience and Intrusive Advising	BCSSE, NSSE, F Student on track
Curricular review and update	Growth in majors Internships
Assessment of College academic programs in the marketplace	Determination of College programs
Technology use for course delivery and engagement	BCSSE, NSSE, F Online course tak
Enrollment management plan	Application growth Reduced processi

COMPONENTS	TIMELINE
for improvements in physical from campus to town from the town in campus events from community members in activities/programs/internships	2022-ongoing
SE, FSSE score growth track	2022-ongoing
ajors	2021-2023
on of competitive advantage of programs	2022-2024
SE, FSSE score growth e takers	2021-2025
growth cessing time	2021-2022

ALUMNI EXPERIENCE

COMPONENTS	MEASUREMENTS	TIMELINE
Engage alumni in recruitment	Applications originating from alumni chapter	2022-2025
Develop relationships between Career Center and RCIAA	Internships available Internships awarded Job placements in alumni companies	2022-2023
Establish regular communications between alumni and the College	Readership of institution and major-specific news Social media followers	2021-2022
Develop a robust multi-level annual alumni giving program	Alumni giving Class gifts	2022-2023

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

COMPONENTS	MEASUREMENTS	TIMELINE
Facilities improvements	Improved physical campus safety features Improved campus beautification projects Campus master plan creation Improved resident halls Stabilization of MS Industrial College buildings	2021-2025
Institutional advancement	Annual giving Lifetime giving Foundation and corporate grants Alumni giving Planned gifts and bequests Donor retention New donor acquisition	2021-2025

Plan Milestones

Student Engagement Plan

Board alignment with governance best practices

Integrate faculty and staff input into annual planning

Teaching Improvement Process and Monitoring Plan

Stable ERP with trained staff

Curricular review and update

Engage alumni in recruitment

Summer 2022

Spring 2023

Spring 2022

Enrollment Management Plan

Institutional Advancement Plan

Fall 2022

Faculty Incentive Plan

Faculty self-governance, planning, and assessment

Provide faculty time and resources to develop as scholars and teachers

Develop relationships between Career Center and RCIAA

Establish regular communications between alumni and the College

Develop a robust multi-level
annual alumni giving program

Online Class Offerings Plan

Master Campus Plan

Facilities improvements

Fall 2023

Spring 2025

Summer 2023

Student Success and Persistence
Program Plan

Academic Program Plan

Strategic Marketing Plan

Institutional technology upgrade
and increased usage

Spring 2024

Assessment of College academic
programs in the marketplace

Fall 2024

Technology use for course delivery and
engagement

Ensure competitive compensation

The Plan





Operations and Governance

Pursue and maintain excellence in governance and business processes.

Results

All board members and faculty of Rust College fulfill their governance, planning, and assessment roles.

All constituents of the College experience a professional and smooth operation.

Shared governance is a critical function of higher education institutions. While the trustees have begun their work on improving and strengthening their functions, the faculty have not yet had the opportunity to determine how best to be integrated into decision-making at the College. Rust College faculty, staff, and students are currently organized to engage through committees. There are 17 standing committees and the potential for ad hoc committees. Under Goal B, Task 1, College leadership will evaluate how shared governance functions, and consider the establishment of an institutional policy and planning committee to support year-

round focus on accreditation as an institutional improvement tool. That would make 18 standing committees. A small college cannot successfully maintain such a high number of committees and reserve enough time for faculty to be good scholars and teacher or staff to serve the College effectively. Evaluating the current status as an institution will allow all internal College stakeholders to identify the most effective roles they can and should play in shared governance and what structure will best serve the College.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Align board governance with best practices in higher education.	1	Conduct an annual board assessment to measure collective and individual adherence to the bylaws and board expectations.
	2	Create an annual board development plan aligned with annual assessment results to support board member ability to fulfill expectations.
	3	Adjust bylaws to include governance committee tasks as the responsibility of the Committee on Trustees.
	4	Adopt a board communications and management platform to support board engagement between meetings.
	5	Dedicate time in each board meeting to a strategic conversation, with agreement on each topic and pre-meeting reading materials.
	6	Implement a peer-to-peer fundraising process for annual board giving.

B. Improve faculty self-governance, including engagement with and accountability for planning and assessment.	1	Assess the faculty governance structure and number of committees for effectiveness, including capacity of a small faculty to fulfill committee obligations, and commit to a reasonable and necessary set of standing committees. (Consider ad hoc time-limited task groups for work that does not regularly require faculty time.)
	2	Establish an Institutional Planning and Policy Committee that includes faculty, staff, and administrators responsible for annual planning, assessment, and accreditation.
	3	Ensure consistency between the faculty and student handbooks.

Technology is critical for the effective functioning of any higher education institution. Appropriate hardware, software, training and support services reduce stress on staff and students thereby creating an environment ripe for learning. Within every function of the College there are technology needs for effective operations.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Equip faculty and staff with reliable hardware and software.	1	Assess the quality of current technology infrastructure, including the hardware students use and update it.
	2	Manage timely software upgrades.
	3	Ensure proper classroom access to WIFI and support for multiple systems (supporting Blackboard and laptop/cell phone access).
B. Optimize the use of technology through full implementation of platforms, continuous training, and access to IT services.	1	Ensure all faculty are proficient in Blackboard and other classroom tools.
	2	Train faculty and staff (with updates as needed) on the Ellucian/Colleague platform.
	3	Train students during orientation week on Colleague and other communication tools. Offer additional training options throughout the year. (Consider online training modules.)
	4	Provide reliable IT support to faculty, staff, and students.

C. Improve business processes and transparency through website improvements.	1	Create visibility and transparency around the strategic plan and related progress through a dedicated page on the website.
	2	Implement a 24/7 payment receipt portal on the website that is integrated with Colleague.
	3	Add a detailed financial aid page to the website inclusive of a FAFSA link, scholarship links and forms, and all steps (and staff contacts) for qualifying for aid at Rust.
	4	Develop a new website, consistent with the new brand standards.

Financial processes unite all functions of the College from enrollment to dining and residences to teaching and learning, having the appropriate financial processes in place support the efficient use of resources. The College will be better positioned

to take full advantage of every dollar with a few critical improvements in financial management.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Update and streamline financial processes.	1	Fully implement Colleague Finance and eliminate the reliance on paper for financial processes.
	2	Integrate strategic enrollment management into the budget and allocation process.

This plan, accreditation, and continuous improvement requires measurement and monitoring. In addition to legal compliance reporting required by the state and the federal government, producing the best student outcomes possible will depend on

effective data collection, analysis, and planning. For College leaders at all levels to understand the impact they are having and be able to make adjustments throughout the year, shoring up institutional research and planning will be vital.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Make data-informed enrollment, retention, budgetary, and staffing decisions.	1	Use the Colleague system to code, record, and report prospective and current student information.
	2	Create an institution-wide performance management process to support strategic plan implementation.
	3	Adopt a platform to support strategic plan implementation.
	4	Adopt survey tools to support performance management (e.g., BCSSE, NSSE, FSSE, campus climate, general satisfaction, etc.).
B. Monitor accreditation requirements, maintain records of activities, and support regular monitoring by an institutional planning and policy committee.	1	Adopt a tool to support preparation for accreditation.
	2	Create a schedule for reporting on record keeping by SACSCOC standard (at least twice per year).



Faculty and Staff Experience

RESULTS

Cultivate a healthy and productive faculty and staff experience for institutional effectiveness.

All Rust College faculty and staff feel valued and respected and perform at their very best.

The marketplace for the best talent is always competitive. One element of recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff is compensation. It will be essential for the

College to benchmark its compensation with its closest competitors and maintain parity, if not a competitive advantage.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Recruit and retain faculty excellence in teaching and research.	1	Raise faculty compensation to market standards.
	2	Finalize and implement the faculty incentive plan.
B. Provide faculty time and resources to develop as scholars and teachers.	1	Assess faculty teaching load and work with faculty to determine a load that provides time to research and for writing, where the desire exists.
	2	Develop a pool of resources to support faculty membership in professional organizations.
	3	Develop a pool of resources to support faculty travel to professional conferences to share their scholarship and participate in professional development opportunities.
	4	Charge the Academic Council (faculty) with assessing the status of teaching and creating a process for ongoing monitoring and improvement.
C. Recruit and retain mission-aligned staff members.	1	Raise staff compensation to market standards.
	2	Create a Staff Council to provide a place for staff to confer on staff-specific concerns and make recommendations to the Executive Council.
	3	Ensure working conditions that support high staff morale and a sense of self-efficacy.

Another essential component to remaining competitive in the marketplace for talent is valuing employees. One way to indicate how much employees are valued is ensuring they have the information they need to participate fully in the life of the

College. Strong internal communication and opportunities to engage in decision-making are fundamental. The latter is also an element of the shared governance, which is addressed in a prior section.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Improve internal communications.	1	Create a weekly communication that combines announcements and notifications from the Executive Council.
	2	Develop a campus intranet with a mobile app to support consistent communication to all campus constituents.
	3	Ensure the intranet has communities for various constituent groups (e.g., students, faculty, staff).
B. Create and improve formal channels for Staff and Faculty Council recommendations to the Executive Council.	1	Revise institutional policies regarding shared governance and decision making to facilitate Faculty and Staff Council recommendations to the Executive Council.
	2	Develop (or update) charters for each Council or body to clarify authority and roles regarding shared decision making.

Student Experience

RESULTS

Ensure a vibrant and engaging student experience for excellent student outcomes.

All Rust College students engage fully in their academic pursuits and feel connected to the College community.

The first step in the student experience is the recruitment process. From the first contact the entire process signals to prospective students and families how the College feels about its students. Additionally, a well-designed plan means a robust

pipeline and larger pool of potential students. This is where increased enrollment begins.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Build an innovative pipeline for future Rustites.	1	Continue the newly launched Youth Summer Basketball and Broadcast Camp for elementary students.
	2	Partner with community youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs of North Mississippi and Tennessee, BRIDGES, Memphis Youth Coalition, AAU Athletics, and GEAR UP to introduce Rust to middle school students regionally.
	3	Take full advantage of the relationship with the United Methodist Church. (See inset.)
	4	Increase virtual/digital recruiting strategies to include virtual tours, content creation for YouTube, and social media.
	5	Engage faculty and alumni in connecting with prospective students. (Consider creating a portal to facilitate.)
	6	Work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and external stakeholders to develop dual enrollment opportunities with surrounding school districts for high school students. (Consider adding online options.)
	7	Increase transfer rate by setting transfer targets, creating MOUs with surrounding community colleges, developing scholarships for transfer students, assigning recruiters to transfer candidates, and developing a Transfer Preview Day.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Build an innovative pipeline for future Rustites.	8	Increase student diversity by assessing the ethnic and national origin of the current student body and then recruiting international and minority students through cultural-specific marketing, development of recruiting territories, and development of targeted scholarships.
	9	Increase the age diversity of students by assessing the age diversity of the current student body and then increasing enrollment of non-traditional students through re-implementation of the Adult Pathways Program and Weekend Program, reengaging “stop out” students, developing curriculum plans for transfer students, and marketing to target populations.
	10	Increase the number of first-time full-time freshman enrollees by collaborating with surrounding school districts to offer tutoring by work-student students, local preview days, assigning recruitment staff to territories, expanding financial aid offerings, offering bus tours, and integrating candidates into Welcome Week activities
	11	Expand Welcome Center services.
B. Improve enrollment management processes.	1	Improve prospective student acceptance conversion rates from 62 days to 7 to 10 days through implementation of Ellucian/ Colleague system admissions application functionality and integration with the website.
	2	Enhance communication and coordination of enrollment management activities by aligning roles and coordinating responsibilities with enrollment and financial aid departments and throughout the College.
	3	Develop targeted consistent communications strategies for students at each stage during the enrollment funnel.
	4	Initiate Early Decision program to generate more interest from academically motivated students.
C. Attract students to Rust through improving overall external communications.	1	Develop a strategic marketing plan which aligns with institutional priorities, supports targeted development of diversity and inclusion marketing resources, and focuses on disproportionality impacted student groups.
	2	Develop targeted marketing messaging/marketing materials around programs of study/divisions.
	3	Enhance social media presence of faculty/staff.
	4	Increase awareness of partnerships programs and early engagement in programs related to career, research, etc.

**See more recruitment goals in the Alumni Experience section.*

The College’s mission requires the academic success of its students. The overall result this plan is designed to achieve is a 4-year graduation rate. To achieve that, students need to be engaged and supported in performing at their best. Ensuring a student-

centered culture, providing the right social and emotional supports, and offering a relevant and rigorous academic program will help students to engage fully and feel connected.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Ensure campus culture is student-centered through communications and training of staff and faculty.	1	Communicate a clear definition of “student-centered” with a framework to support how to apply it across all departments and functions in the College.
	2	Support building a student-centered culture by providing discussion and troubleshooting sessions for faculty and staff.
B. Restructure support for students with a strong emphasis on advising and campus enrichment.	1	Review effective student success and persistence programs and design the most appropriate approach for the College.
	2	Increase information about and access to First Year Experience resources.
	3	Establish a long-term strategy to continue offering online only class options for all students to engage in distance learning.
	4	Require degree completion plans for each student by the end of their first year.
	5	Participate in the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to conduct a survey of student satisfaction and respond to results annually.
C. Ensure curriculum is relevant to post-graduate success.	1	Charge the Academic Council (faculty) with assessing the academic landscape and determining the best academic program for Rust College.

D. Expand student experiences and academic options through additional Rust degree programs and by partnering with other academic institutions.	1	Charge the Academic Council (faculty) with determining which aspects of the academic program will be best served by partnerships and identifying potential partnerships.
	2	Implement and monitor the dual degree program with the University of Mississippi for Mathematics majors.

One of the most important factors in student retention is student engagement. Students who feel they are a part of a community are more likely to remain a part of that community. Opportunities to engage with each other; with College

administrators, faculty, and staff; and with the town in which they live will create the kinds of connections that can bond students with the institution.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Provide robust support for individual growth through engagement on campus and self-care.	1	Complete the Student Engagement Division strategic plan.
	2	Support student mental health through hiring a licensed counselor.
	3	Implement Welcome Week activities in the Fall and Spring semesters.
	4	Engage the Chaplain as a partner in student engagement.

B. Stabilize athletic programs and develop a long-term improvement plan.	1	Include pool repairs, track renovation, tennis court renovation, locker room renovations in the creation of an exercise/wellness center in the master facilities plan. (See Foundation Elements, Facilities, Goal B.)
	2	Offer majors and minors in sports management and/or other concentrations related to kinesiology and athletics. (See also Academics, Goal C.)
	3	Continue to offer athletic scholarships and look for external sources for funding to increase the availability of scholarships. (See also Student Recruitment.)
	4	Ensure the formal integration of coaches into student recruitment and retention activities through the Enrollment Management Plan. (See also Student Recruitment, Goal B.)
	5	Continue the recent improvement in communications and public relations for all sports teams with improved internal communications for intramurals.
	6	Design an overall student wellness program - inclusive of, but not exclusive to intramurals.
C. Create and improve formal channels for Student Government Association recommendations to the Executive Council.	1	Work with the SGA to define their role in campus governance and decision-making.
D. Build a bridge from Rust College students, faculty, and staff to community members.	1	Reimagine the Ida B. Wells Social Justice and Interpretive Center for mutual use by students and community members.
	2	Develop a working partnership with the City, the Chamber, and others to improve physical connections, plan community activities, and incent businesses that the College and its students can support.
	3	Reignite the Rust tradition of hosting world class events featuring a variety of talented artists and intellectuals, including the Blues Festival.
	4	Explore creating incentives for students to remain in Holly Springs post-graduation.

D. Build a bridge from Rust College students, faculty, and staff to community members.	5	Continue to invite the whole community to the Rust campus through the Founder's Day parade and other campus activities.
	6	Expand entrepreneurship opportunities for students through exploring partnerships with the Chamber and others for activities like student pop up shops.
	7	Expand leadership training for students by partnership with the Chamber to revive the Young Leaders program.

A College's reputation rests, in part, on the success of its graduates. Although the College cannot play a significant role in the lives of its students once they have become alumni, it can help them to launch and give them solid landing options. Establishing relationships with graduate schools and employers to benefit graduates

and systematizing recruitment will raise the value of the College in the eyes of students, parents, graduate students, and employers. Ensuring students are prepared to take advantage of those options will raise the value even more so.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Connect students to service and work while they are in college.	1	Continue to work with local industries for paid student internships and employment.
	2	Determine the appropriate community service load for Rust College students and require service for graduation. Consider allowing students to earn credit.
B. Connect students to post-graduation employment opportunities.	1	Engage alumni in creating a Rust College career network.
	2	Integrate student internships and graduate employment opportunities into business and corporate funding relationships.

C. Connect students to graduate school programs.	1	Engage alumni in creating a Rust College graduate school network.
	2	Develop relationships with graduate programs that are reasonable extensions of College academic program.
	3	Engage faculty in developing and strengthening formal relationships with their graduate institutions.
D. Include post-graduate preparation programming in intrusive advising.	1	Create a set of activities appropriate for each year (e.g., first year, sophomore, etc.) to ensure the development of a post-graduate plan.
	2	Assign faculty advisors with aligned academic programs and/or interests when majors are declared.



ALUMNI EXPERIENCE

Maintain mutual engagement and benefit between the College and its alumni.*

RESULTS

All alumni feel appreciated by and connected to the College.

The College’s alumni embody the school’s reputation. Engaging them in recruiting and retaining students puts valuable assets to good use. An added benefit is that

they want to play this role. Rust College alumni live all over the world. They would effectively extend the impact of admission staff without taxing the budget.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Engage local alumni chapters to assist with recruiting high school students in their areas with a goal of 15+ new students annually from each of the 14 active chapters.	1	Develop monthly trainings for alumni to help them develop and implement recruitment plans and equip chapters with toolkits.
	2	Create yearly recruitment challenges where alumni chapters can track progress and share their success stories with each other.
B. Partner with alumni to share their skills and connections with students.	1	Showcase alumni successes to inspire students.
	2	Revise the Alumni Handbook, highlighting paths for helpful alumni relationships with current students.
C. Work with alumni to connect students with internships and post-graduation jobs.	1	Work with alumni to engage students in internships in their local, national, and international communities.
	2	Utilize alumni to expose students to career pathways and post-graduate opportunities.
	3	Develop a company information center and resume/interview training programs with the assistance of alumni.

*See *Institutional Advancement for Alumni giving.*

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Support all that we do by strengthening our institutional advancement and improving our facilities.

The Office of Institutional Advancement must identify, secure, and manage resources to support scholarship, instruction, and programs that promote student success and advance the mission and vision of Rust College. Over the next three years, the College will need to build critical infrastructure to support contemporary

development and fundraising activities, including prospect identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship. This along with developing a culture of philanthropy among internal and external stakeholders are the most critical elements of strengthening institutional advancement at Rust College.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Build institutional development infrastructure.	1	Ensure sufficient staffing (minimum six FTEs plus the senior leader) to operate a robust institutional advancement office.
	2	Adopt a customer relations management (CRM) platform to support institutional advancement in higher education.
	3	Build major and planned giving infrastructure.
B. Raise funds for physical campus improvements.	1	Explore federal funding for the revitalization of the Mississippi Industrial College campus.
	2	Launch a capital campaign for the revitalization of the Mississippi Industrial College campus and main campus improvements.
C. Increase alumni giving.	1	Embrace the alumni of Mississippi Industrial College, creating connections to Rust College.
	2	Create an annual regional alumni giving campaign with regional alumni leadership.
	3	Publicly recognize alumni who have been consistent givers, regardless of amounts, throughout the years.

D. Increase giving from stakeholders beyond the alumni population.	1	Publicly recognize alumni who have been consistent givers, regardless of amounts, throughout the years.
	2	Establish and launch annual and lifetime giving campaigns.
E. Express optimism about the present and future of Rust College through robust media relations and communications.	1	Launch new brand guidelines.
	2	Build bilingual materials.
	3	Develop and market stories of Rust alumni, students, faculty, board, and staff.
	4	Create a marketing plan to fully support the strategic plan.
	5	Build e-commerce store.
	6	Utilize a comprehensive media monitoring service (Meltwater).



Campus facilities are both the foundation and face of the College. Although a college is more than its infrastructure, a historic institution like Rust College cannot truly thrive without its buildings and grounds. The College must, therefore, invest

significantly in its facilities. There are immediate safety and capacity needs, but there is also a need for a campus master plan.

Goal	Action Items	
A. Improve the student-centered nature of campus by prioritizing improvements to the dormitories and to the overall appearance of campus.	1	Return MIC housing to apartment-style student living for upperclassmen.
	2	Upgrade current dormitories to include bathrooms and community living spaces.
	3	Add outdoor dining/lounge spaces.
B. Create a campus master plan.	1	Release an RFP and secure a contract with a master planning firm.
	2	Develop a committee to guide the process, ensuring input from each stakeholder group (parents, students, faculty, alumni, staff, and community members).





6/15/25

RUST COLLEGE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022  **2025**