RISE 2030 | Strategic Plan Task Planning

2.1 Grow Non-Credit Academic Offerings

Priority: Invest in Academic Innovation
Goal: Develop New Programs that align with workforce and transfer demands

Strategic Action: *Grow non-credit offerings in response to regional industry skill demands (i.e., general professional development, AI skill building, expanded bilingual course delivery) and in alignment with regional job growth in fields such as teaching, data management, and market research.*

Goal Champions: Randy Hines, Associate Professor of Computer Aided Design and Drafting & Suzanne Markin, Workforce Education Manager

STRATEGIC ACTION TASK PLAN

Phase 0: *Educate Colleagues on the Differences Between Credit and Non-Credit Pathways to Ensure They Can Confidently Advise Students on Career Options.*

Phase 1: Identify Industry Skill Needs & Non-Credit Opportunities

1. Conduct Labor Market and Industry Demand Analysis

    o *Analyze state and regional workforce data to identify high-demand skills in key industries, leveraging already completed work where possible.*

    o *Engage economic development organizations and workforce boards to validate findings.*

    o *Identify emerging trends (e.g., AI, bilingual workforce demand) to future-proof offerings.*

2. Engage Employers and Community Partners

    o *Hold focus groups and interviews with regional employers to identify training gaps.*

    o *Identify which skills should be prioritized for short-term training solutions.*

    o *Establish partnerships for co-developed non-credit courses.*

3. Assess Current Non-Credit Offerings for Gaps and Expansion Potential

    o *Review existing non-credit programs for alignment with industry trends.*

    o *Identify areas where existing programs can be modified, updated, or expanded, including existing degree programs that can be modularized to create non-degree credentials.*

- o *Analyze enrollment and completion rates to assess student demand.*

- o *Benchmark competing institutions to understand market competition and any key WCC differentiators.*

- o *Consider if any existing non-credit offerings with low interest should be deprioritized to create resourcing for new non-credit opportunities.*

4. Synthesize Findings into Recommended Non-Credit Offerings

- o *Cross-analyze labor market data, employer input, and current program gaps.*

- o *Develop a list of high-priority non-credit programs with supporting rationale.*

- o *Share findings and preliminary recommendations with internal stakeholders (academic leadership, workforce development teams) for validation.*

Phase 2: Design and Develop Non-Credit Programs

Note for action team: Tasks 5-6 are purely illustrative. In your action team, please replace steps 5-6 with your WCC process for developing and approving curriculum.

5. Identify a subject matter expert to develop the curriculum and teach the course
6. Secure Funding and Institutionalize Non-Credit Education Growth (appears twice because grant funds are often used to seed non-credit initiatives)

- o *Explore state grants, workforce development funds, and employer co-investment.*

- o *Advocate for institutional support to sustain program expansion.*

- o *Ensure non-credit programming is integrated into long-term college strategy.*

- o *Identify scholarship or grant opportunities that are student-specific to offset program cost, as non-credit is not eligible for financial aid.*

7. Develop Course Content and Delivery Models

- o *Partner with industry experts and faculty to develop relevant curriculum.*

- o *Create flexible learning models, including short courses, bootcamps, and micro credentials.*

- o *Ensure content addresses real-world applications (e.g., project-based learning, case studies).*

8. Secure Approvals and Compliance

- o *Work with college leadership and accreditation bodies, when appropriate, for program approvals.*

- o *Ensure compliance with state, federal, and industry credentialing requirements.*

      o *Finalize program structure, fees, and registration processes.*

9. *Identify alternative funding sources for students*

Phase 3: Pilot and Launch Non-Credit Programs

10. Launch Initial Pilot Offerings in Targeted Industries

      o *Select 2-3 high-priority fields for pilot course rollout.*

      o *Offer limited-enrollment cohorts for real-time feedback collection.*

      o *Ensure dedicated student support and advising services are in place.*

      o *Update course catalog, SIS, and degree audit software to reflect new program additions.*

      o *Develop and administer training for relevant student advising staff and admissions counselors.*

11. Implement Marketing and Employer Outreach

      o *Develop targeted marketing campaigns focused on working professionals and career changers.*

      o *Promote programs through employer partnerships and workforce boards.*

      o *Highlight job placement potential and industry demand in outreach materials.*

12. Establish Tracking and Support Mechanisms

      o *Implement data tracking for student enrollment, retention, and completion rates.*

      o *Gather employer feedback on training outcomes and skill application.*

      o *Provide ongoing career coaching and support services for program participants.*

Phase 4: Evaluate, Optimize, and Scale

13. Measure Program Effectiveness and Student Outcomes

      o *Conduct post-program surveys to assess student satisfaction and learning outcomes.*

      o *Evaluate program impact on career advancement (e.g., job placement, salary increases).*

      o *Track employer satisfaction with newly trained workers.*

14. Refine and Expand Non-Credit Offerings

      o *Adjust curriculum and delivery models based on feedback.*

      o *Expand successful pilots into permanent course offerings.*

WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- o *Identify additional high-demand skill areas for future program development.*

15. Secure Funding and Institutionalize Non-Credit Education Growth

- o *Explore state grants, workforce development funds, and employer co-investment.*

- o *Advocate for institutional support to sustain program expansion.*

- o *Ensure non-credit programming is integrated into long-term college strategy.*

TEAM AND INVESTMENT

Action Teams should include individuals who bring the following perspectives and expertise:

- Staff who actively engage with local businesses, non-profits, and government organizations.
- Conduct industry outreach and employer engagement.
- Design and align non-credit programs with industry needs.
- Promote programs and recruit students.
- Track student enrollment, outcomes, and employer feedback.

Investment

- **High investment** for WCC providing:
  - o Curriculum development funding (content creation, faculty stipends)
    - Credit faculty buy-in
    - Willingness to explore PLC
    - Can contracts be revised to include non-credit in capacity? Union contracts do not currently allow for this engagement.
  - o Employer and community engagement efforts
  - o Marketing and recruitment campaigns
    - Recommendation: embedded staff within workforce to be able to provide dynamic perspectives & campaigns
    - This would also increase the speed at which the message gets out (turnaround time from work to publishing). Non-credit moves very quickly, and often, the time needed for projects is not prioritized due to capacity. This affects how we can make an impact.
  - o Technology investments for flexible learning formats
    - Salesforce
    - Non-credit reg system
  - o Advisor/Career Counselor specific to CTE/non-credit
    - Concierge to Adult learners
  - o Employee Capacity:
    - Off-site coordinator