RISE 2030 | Strategic Plan Task Planning

3.3 Assess Student Basic Needs Assistance

Priority: Strengthen the Student Experience
Goal: Support the Whole Student

Strategic Action: *Assess the extent to which students require assistance with basic needs for well-being or access to campus facilities (i.e., transportation, health services, food) and identify opportunities to mitigate potential barriers, including identifying community partners that may provide resources to students.*

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STRATEGIC ACTION TASK PLAN

Phase 1: Assess and Analyze Current Models for Supporting Students' Basic Needs

1. Map and Deepen Understanding of the Student Journey

    o   *Collaborate with the 3.1 team to review and enhance existing journey maps.*

    o   *Identify and document all student touchpoints, decision points, and pain points related to basic needs.*

    o   *Note where students do not intersect with services they may need.*

    o   *Draft additional interview or survey questions to explore help-seeking behavior, barriers, and decision influences.*

    o   *Facilitate working sessions to uncover gaps (e.g., childcare access, housing navigation).*

2. Assess Institutional and Regional Data on Student Needs
    o   Inventory all internal data sources (FAFSA, food pantry, emergency aid, withdrawal reasons).
    o   Identify which service teams collect data, how it's stored, and any limitations in access or usability.
    o   Include faculty and staff in discussions to uncover additional data sources and barriers.
    o   Compare institutional findings with regional and demographic data (e.g., ALICE, CoC reports).
    o   Identify top issues and any emerging needs not well tracked by current systems.

3. Evaluate and Improve Data Tracking Capabilities

- o *Map who collects what data, with what tools (e.g., CRM, Excel, case notes), and whether it is accessible.*
- o *Flag gaps: teams with no data, siloed systems, or a lack of analysis tools.*
- o *Identify where training, tools, or IT integration are needed.*
- o *Prioritize support for high-impact areas that lack effective tracking.*

4. Analyze Basic Needs Requests and Student Support Service Usage

- o *Review applications, case notes, and service logs to identify the most frequent student needs.*
- o *Analyze service trends by timing, usage, and student concerns.*
- o *Pinpoint drop-off points where students disengage or stop following up.*
- o *Disaggregate data by demographics to identify equity gaps in access.*
- o *Interview staff about patterns among underserved or disengaged students.*

5. Audit Community Partnerships and Institutional Practices

- o *Create a list of current external partners by service type; compare against unmet needs to identify referral gaps.*
- o *Review policies, SOPs, and informal practices across departments.*
- o *Map how referrals to community resources occur—from inquiry to resolution.*
- o *Identify undocumented staff "workarounds" and areas of inconsistency or confusion.*
- o *Capture effective practices and barriers in routing students to support.*

6. Develop and Prioritize Solutions to Strengthen Support Systems

- o *Host a cross-stakeholder workshop to brainstorm and prioritize improvements to referral, tracking, and partner engagement systems.*
- o *Create a Resource Enhancement Matrix to score potential solutions by urgency, impact, and feasibility.*
- o *Categorize recommendations as short-term (quick fixes) or long-term (systemic changes).*
- o *Assign responsible teams and note resource needs for implementation.*

Phase 2: Brainstorm Improvement Opportunities for Existing Programs

7. Assess the need to redesign, improve, or enhance existing basic needs support initiatives.

- Review usage, outcome, and referral data for all basic needs programs (e.g., food pantry, housing, emergency aid) over the past 2 years.

- Meet with frontline staff to document observed pain points, bottlenecks, or outdated procedures that hinder effectiveness.

- Identify student populations that are underutilizing services and assess whether access, awareness, or eligibility policies may be contributing factors.

8. Create and distribute a brief student survey or focus group protocol.

- Draft 5–10 core questions that explore awareness, access, experience, and improvement suggestions for basic needs services.

- Vet the survey or focus group protocol with student services and IE (if needed), then distribute through multiple student communication channels.

- Offer incentives and schedule 2–3 focus group sessions (in person or virtual) that reflect a range of student demographics (e.g., part-time, parenting, transfer-in).

9. Visualize the end-to-end experience of seeking and receiving support.

- Map the current student journey from need identification to resolution (e.g., applying for emergency aid, accessing food support).

- Identify common friction points, decision points, and delays in the journey based on real student or staff input.

- Use journey maps to highlight areas where process redesign, communication improvements, or technology enhancements are needed.

10. Compare the institution's offerings and processes to similar colleges and summarize potential models or ideas to pilot or adapt locally.

- Select 3–5 peer or aspirational institutions and research their basic needs support models (e.g., co-located services, case management systems, mobile food pantries).

- Document promising practices, staffing structures, and funding strategies used at those colleges.

- Present a summary to your team, with 3–4 ideas categorized by readiness: "Easy Wins," "Scalable Innovations," and "Long-Term Aspirations."

Phase 3: Reevaluate, Scale, and Optimize

11. Assess Program Impact and Student Outcomes

- Track KPIs (e.g., utilization rates, student retention, academic success indicators).

- Conduct post-program surveys and focus groups to gather student feedback.

- *Compare pre- and post-implementation data to measure improvement.*

12. Optimize and Scale Community Partnership Model

- *Identify which external partnerships are most effective and expand successful collaborations.*

- *Establish an ongoing review process to assess partner contributions and student impact.*

- *Adjust referral systems, communication plans, and service availability as needed.*

13. Secure Long-Term Funding and Institutionalize Support

- *Explore grant opportunities and cost-sharing models with partners.*

- *Advocate for dedicated institutional funding to sustain and grow basic needs programs.*

- *Integrate basic needs services into the college's strategic planning and budgeting process.*

14. Evaluate Current Childcare and Transportation Solutions

- *Determine how well the current childcare and transportation pilots are meeting their stated goals for student access, retention, or satisfaction.*

- *Collect quantitative data on student usage, demographic reach, and term-to-term retention for pilot participants.*

- *Distribute a short satisfaction survey to participants focused on convenience, impact on academic progress, and unmet needs.*

- *Conduct brief interviews or check-ins with a sample of pilot users to gain qualitative feedback on what worked well and what did not.*

- *Assess factors limiting the pilot's ability to scale.*

    1. *Identify resource constraints such as funding, staffing, space, or vendor limitations that restrict capacity.*

    2. *Review policies, eligibility requirements, or scheduling models that may unintentionally exclude students.*

    3. *Host a debrief with operational and frontline staff to discuss logistical barriers and process inefficiencies they have observed.*

- *Evaluate what it would take to expand the pilot sustainably.*

    1. *Estimate the cost, staffing, and infrastructure needed to scale the pilot to serve a broader student population.*

    2. *Develop a scenario model with 2–3 expansion options (e.g., full-scale, phased growth, hybrid model with partner support).*

3. *Identify potential funding sources (grants, institutional budget, community partnerships) and draft a sustainability plan outlining short- and long-term investment needs.*

TEAM AND INVESTMENT

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

- Oversees student outreach and engagement.
- Develops and manages external resource partnerships.
- Designs outreach materials and awareness campaigns.

Investment

- **Low to Medium investment** for WCC providing:
  - Partnership development resources (employer engagement, coordination with on-campus units)
  - Student engagement efforts (surveys, focus groups, and outreach)
  - Marketing and awareness campaign materials