KIRTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIC & ACTION PLAN
a foundation for daily strategic thinking and action

2013 – 2019
1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes the strategic direction for Kirtland Community College. It is the result of an all-day thinking and visioning session with key stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, members of the board of trustees and foundation, representatives from local government and community members. The direction Kirtland takes during the next five years will be driven by the wishes of these 136 key players who worked diligently at 17 tables throughout the day.

A powerful process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was used during this session. The process elicits positive stories and experiences from the participants on both personal and organizational levels. AI facilitates communication and encourages networking. A review of the plan developed from Kirtland’s last AI summit five years ago would indicate a majority of these plans have been accomplished.

Participants were asked to engage in inquiry regarding Kirtland’s future. They were encouraged to dream and envision ideas without limits. Freedom and creativity generated fun and laughter. Negative thoughts and comments were reframed into positive ones, ultimately resulting in a clear vision for Kirtland. This document contains parts of provocative propositions and personal commitments from employees, generated from each table/group’s story or vision.

This new plan also is evidence of continued effort, professionalism and creativity. It delivers a philosophy Kirtland will implement on a daily basis. Strategic thinking at Kirtland does not end with this process; rather, it becomes the foundation of daily activity.

Kirtland is grateful for the generosity and expertise of facilitators Luann Mabarak, Alan Mabarak, Nick Holton and Tim Scherer who contributed to the design and orchestration of the all-day session. Special thanks go to Nick Baker for his contributions from the Office of Institutional Research. Kirtland also appreciates our students, the members of the greater community and board trustees who participated in the planning summit.

Tom Quinn, Ed. D.
President
Change at any college is limited by legal, political, geographic and economic realities which we assume cannot or should not be changed. While creating a vision for the future, these assumptions must be considered. Planning at Kirtland is bound by the following realities:

### REGION

- Kirtland is governed by the Kirtland Community College Board of Trustees, an elected, public, volunteer board. The communities served by Kirtland remain supportive of Kirtland’s contributions to the area. The service area is rural with limited employment opportunities for graduates.
- 20% of students will continue to come from outside the college’s immediate service area.
- The population of the area is declining and the citizenry is becoming older. Kirtland assumes about 40% of the population will be older than 65 within 5 to 10 years. Therefore, enrollment will decline unless the college expands its territory and program offerings.
- A local tax levy of two mills supports operations at the college. The levy accounts for about 45% of the college’s budget. A local tax levy of .6 mills is a primary source of support for M-TEC. These sources of revenue will continue.

### STUDENTS

- More than 80% of Kirtland students are between the ages of 18 and 40, and 32% indicate that they want weekend classes.
- Online enrollment will continue to expand beyond the 30% who already take online courses.
- 46% of students attended another college before Kirtland. Nine percent of Kirtland students have already completed a degree.
- The State of Michigan and the federal government hold Kirtland accountable for graduation and retention rates, loan default rates, overall student costs, and placement and transfer rates. The state will enforce accountability with changes in financial appropriations.

### FACILITIES

- The college will secure funding for a regional health sciences center on I-75 between Roscommon and Grayling. This will have a long-term effect on the regions served, as well as neighboring communities.
- Kirtland facilities are well maintained, but in several instances need major updating. Learning spaces are not designed for new programs and the infrastructure on the Roscommon campus is nearly 50 years old.
- The college maintains an extension location (M-TEC) in Gaylord. The campus shares a building with a county agency called the University Center. The University Center rents space to other two- and four-year colleges, making it a competitor with Kirtland.
- M-TEC facilities are in excellent condition, but too small for added programming. It is assumed this configuration will remain the same and that the college will attempt to pass a mill levy for the Gaylord M-TEC site before 2019. Kirtland will partner with the University Center to accomplish this.
- The college owns a newly remodeled building and operates an extension location in West Branch. Since this location has been successful, Kirtland assumes it will continue operations at this location.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Local school districts increasingly look to Kirtland to provide dual enrollment options to their students. Local school districts will continue to struggle financially but Kirtland can provide a pathway for student success in college.
- At the request of citizens, Kirtland will establish a public school academy to better serve the needs of the public.

54% of students report that the educational programs Kirtland offers is the most important reason for attending Kirtland.

Kirtland is a first choice for education for 78% of students.

More than 40% of students are enrolled in health care programs.
3. KIRTLAND’S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

55% of students primarily attend our Roscommon campus. 20% are taking classes at either our Gaylord M-TEC, West Branch or Tawas locations. Online enrollment continues to grow. More than 30% of students take online classes in conjunction with on-campus classes.

50% of students intend to obtain a two-year degree and enter the workforce, while 40% intend to continue their education by transferring to a university.

- Kirtland’s tuition and fees are near the average of our peer community colleges and one-quarter to one-third the cost of a public university.
- Kirtland has a history of creating new and innovative programs that offer graduates good starting salaries.
- The college is well-positioned to compete in online markets. It is an award-winning college for technology and has made great progress to offer an increasing number of fully online programs.
- Kirtland is located in the center of northern Michigan allowing it to expand its service area in all directions.
- It is connected to a fiber optic link, opening doors for enhanced digital services.
- Kirtland has a fund balance that will allow it to invest in new programming opportunities.
- Kirtland is a name brand readily recognized in the communities it has served for nearly 50 years.
- Kirtland has recently secured land along I-75, the main thoroughfare in northern Michigan, which will significantly increase visibility.
- Kirtland maintains a good image in its communities.
- The Roscommon campus has plenty of land and extra building space for expansion or new program development.
- Kirtland has an accreditation process that fosters change and continuous improvement.
- Kirtland has already faced much of the impact of declining enrollment with reorganization.
- Kirtland is a strong competitor with other northern Michigan colleges. There are no universities close to Kirtland.
- Four-year colleges will become more accepting of Kirtland courses because of legislative and increasing enrollment pressures.
- Kirtland has partnerships in place with several four-year colleges and universities and expects to continue forming new partnerships to benefit transfer students.
- Kirtland is a leader in reacting to accountability measures that quantify a return on investment for students.
- Universities are more willing to collaborate with Kirtland to offer programs because of its location.
- Kirtland has positioned itself to respond to legislative and citizen concerns.

4. THE PLANNING PROCESS

On September 12, 2013, a summit for Kirtland was conducted in Houghton Lake. Facilitators used a process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to lead participants in a discussion on what we do best and how we can do more. The process was familiar to many employees because the college first used this style of strategic visioning in January, 2008.

This document draws from the information collected at the summit from all stakeholder groups. The information was sorted, collated and discussed before participants arrived at common themes. After a preliminary document was produced it was discussed by the facilitators to develop a format to share. Later, it was shared with larger audiences to create assurances that indeed the new strategic plan represented the intentions of the participants.
Participants in the strategic planning summit recommended that Kirtland strengthen its commitment to student learning and place an emphasis on learning rather than teaching. One table emphasized, “We focus on student success.” On the surface this is a change, but further reflection indicates this signals a shift in the fundamental beliefs of employees and others who participated in the summit. The strategic emphasis is not on what the intentions are for instruction, but rather what students can do and what they know upon graduation.

Kirtland is committed to preparing students to become leaders in our communities and a vital part of the economy of northern Michigan. It has the challenge of providing solutions to Michigan’s current economic problems and of providing a relevant curriculum for students that will be of value to them in the home, the workplace and in their communities.

Participants routinely recognized the need for new programs that make the college competitive and attractive to students. To meet this challenge, Kirtland will offer programs that have proven to be needed and valuable to the larger community. We recognize that there is an increasing need to create a talented workforce for the communities we serve. To do this we need to provide learning environments and employer input directed at what a student will encounter in the workforce or at a university.

Three predominant themes were developed from the information gathered. These themes summarize the future direction of the college.

**THEME 1: QUALITY LEARNING & INSTRUCTION**

We need to be creative in overcoming various geographical and economic challenges and finding inventive ways to deliver services to our customer base, whether it is online or in a more traditional classroom setting. Student outcomes and success rates should be a driving force in the college’s decision-making process, as our students’ success is our success. Kirtland will be known as college where individuals feel welcome, providing an environment where students and employees both are valued for their unique contributions.

To maintain strong programs, Kirtland must offer strong professional development and access to state-of-the-art technology. Kirtland intends to develop a new regional health sciences center along I-75 that will showcase new simulation training equipment attractive to students and healthcare professionals. This will provide greater opportunities for students to learn and practice a wide array of medical procedures under the guidance of our excellent faculty.

Kirtland can no longer remain a “hidden gem,” as many participants stated. Providing citizens access to innovative educational opportunities is imperative. It can increase access by providing high quality dual enrollment opportunities, utilizing its competitive advantages to provide hybrid and online programs and courses, and by continuing to locate easily accessible campuses and extension sites, including using the newly acquired land on I-75 between Roscommon and Grayling to provide greater learning opportunities to all of northern Michigan.

**TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION WE WILL:**

- Build new, enhance existing, and develop more cohesive relationships with local public schools. By networking with K-12 faculty and developing K-12 initiatives, we will improve access to opportunities via Kirtland. We will become active ambassadors to high schools in the area to blend and transition students to Kirtland through high school programs.
- Foster an innovative educational environment by researching and responding to changes in educational trends. Our confidence will allow us to take risks and succeed in delivering desired outcomes.
- Cultivate our positive image, continue to inform current and prospective students of the opportunities we provide, and of the need for post-secondary education in the workforce.
- Explore ways to create innovative course delivery options, including open-concept and accelerated delivery to meet the needs of students in their program of study.
- Research options and implement best practices to minimize costs for students, including the cost of textbooks, computers, and transportation to and from college.
- Incorporate the newest instructional and program technologies. Faculty will have the support they need to be proficient to teach students how to use those new tools, ensuring rigor and relevancy.
- Provide new and continuing professional development activities that enable faculty to focus their instruction on student learning.
- Strengthen the use of active learning classrooms, focusing on how students will apply these strategies in the workforce.
- Strengthen the use of citizen advisory committees and labor market information to connect curriculum with community needs and economic development.
- Develop programs attractive to students that also meet the needs of a changing Michigan economy.
- Repurpose courses to meet the intent of the Michigan Transfer Agreement. Expand the role of general education to include a focus on necessary learner outcomes required for graduation.
- Implement a new plan to assess student learning, using the information gathered to strengthen learning.
- Make retention and graduation rates a focus of college activities so the college ranks in the top 10 of Michigan community colleges in these measures, recognizing that advising and tutoring are an integral part of this success.
- Place a new emphasis on informal learning opportunities for students through robust activities and learning facilities.
A very apparent theme of the planning summit was the need for and the challenge of expanding the use of community resources and building stronger connections with communities. Employees and citizens know that to remain strong, Kirtland must help build stronger communities. This is reflected in the new mission statement. Participants repeatedly stated that Kirtland must provide value to communities, tell our story to communities, participate in community events and government, build relationships with employers, ask communities for help, help bring business to our communities, maintain strong community education, strengthen workforce development education, bring more citizens to campus, and ultimately, provide graduates with skills needed in communities. When employees contribute to this effort, the college will not only be much stronger externally, but more rewarding for employees. This theme is of special strategic value for the college because it indicates a maturity in its thinking.

Kirtland will continually reinforce the image that we are the leading provider of education in the region, supplying affordable training and certification toward placement in the workplace and for meeting students’ future learning needs at other universities.

We recognize that our strength lies in the communities we serve. It is, therefore, imperative that we strengthen economic development in the area and use all the tools available to do so. Non-credit and informal learning opportunities are valuable to us and a strength we can build upon.

In addition, participants of the planning summit expressed the belief that Kirtland must also have a strong inner community. As one table stated, “Our success comes from our passion for students, our vision for the future, and our open communications. To accomplish this, employees must contribute to the solution of problems by working together.” All staff members have enhanced job responsibilities so they must learn to ask for help, get out of their offices, seek solutions to problems and recognize that the college values an innovative environment, and that all employees fundamentally believe mistakes are not only allowed, but also create opportunities from which we can all learn.

TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION WE WILL:

- Promote Kirtland’s image as an accessible, innovative, community-minded college creating positive change that transforms lives.
- Invite more students and community members to consistently promote Kirtland, a hidden gem. The quality of our library, technology, people, activities, curriculum, and campus locations make it appealing.
- Broaden and enhance our existing network of business and community members. Building relationships with employers will create greater access to job placement and educational opportunities for students.
- Partner with local businesses to create more economic opportunities. We will be recognized as a local resource center, developing partnerships with businesses and local non-profit organizations.
- Grow the concept and availability of community education and workforce development. We plan to develop more community education and workforce development classes in all of the counties we serve and raise the collective community consciousness by promoting benefits.
- Grow partnerships with other colleges and universities to offer programs that will make education more possible and increase the percentage of the population with bachelor’s degrees or higher.
- Recognize the efforts and successes of college stakeholders in order to support and sustain student success. A process will be developed to inform administration and the public of the successes of faculty and staff.
- Engage with students in K-12 schools, community groups and public libraries to generate more interest in careers.
- Expand our use of community resources to provide the college and students more opportunities.
- Encourage innovation among employees to create distinctive programs and activities.
- Seek new communication models that will help employees make sense of the changes impacting Kirtland and of the strategies to address them.
Of primary significance in this theme is the development of new programs that will create a talented workforce for northern Michigan. Kirtland must seek programs that offer it a competitive advantage, very often in collaboration with various state agencies that will contribute the start-up costs for a new program. At times, new programs may entail a significant financial risk. Liberal arts instruction must take on an additional new role, that of preparing students to be active participants in leadership roles in the community and in the workplace. This will be challenging. Adding to the challenge is the need to provide students with applicable skills defined in the learner outcomes for the AA degree. This will require a new direction toward measured student learning rather than teaching.

Since the college’s location is without close access to universities, the institution has a strategic opportunity to bring four-year universities to the college facilities. Leveraging college resources can provide citizens added opportunities in the form of university courses.

A new facility on I-75 provides the special challenge of finding additional strategic uses for the Roscommon campus. The Roscommon campus has been and will always be here. There are no plans to discontinue educational offerings at the Roscommon location, but Kirtland must use it wisely and refurbish it for new uses. It has space for strategic partners or new program development in the future.

A consistent theme at the strategic planning summit was the need for new dual-enrollment opportunities. Neither Kirtland nor local public schools are accomplishing all of their objectives and many local public schools are currently financially stressed to a breaking point, or they will be soon. This is a strategic issue not only for Kirtland but the whole of north central Michigan. To accomplish its objectives Kirtland must strategically position itself as a leader in the transformation of education and for collaboration to create better learning.

Kirtland has now expanded its market and service areas beyond its capacity to deliver education at quality levels and this problem will get worse as local school districts ask for help. Kirtland must determine how to increase revenues to expand its workforce to solve this strategic issue.

**TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION WE WILL:**

- Improve student access to programs and courses through effective use of all three college locations and its global online campus.
- Make accessibility a major consideration in every project, program and system we have or create as a means of meeting student needs. “How can this/we be more accessible?” will be added to staff meeting agendas, internal newsletters and emails.
- Take financial risks for product development in the form of new programs, and the marketing of these in anticipation of growth industries.
- Plan and build a new health sciences facility incorporating the use of new, robust technology, leveraging the land available along I-75.
- Expand student access to online services specifically designed to meet the needs of students, address changes in instruction delivery methods, and fill the needs of employers and the global workforce.
- Ask business owners to expand internship opportunities for students.
- Be known for our dynamic programs, fresh technology and educational experiences that transform futures and contribute to thriving local economies.
- Provide all-encompassing educational opportunities, utilizing the most state-of-the-art technology, offering relevant certificates and programs designed to prepare students to be successful in high-demand fields.
- Develop and begin to implement a plan to re-purpose and update the Roscommon campus.
- Prepare and implement a plan to inform voters of the need for a new, more accessible facility located along I-75.
- Develop new business, government and relationships to bring new programs and services to Kirtland’s service area.
- Continue to strengthen the college foundation to make a significant impact on college operations.
- Expand the role of associate of arts degrees and strengthen their transferability.
- Become a strong leader in the transformation of K-12 secondary education.
- Leverage the use of newly acquired land along I-75 to create “place” for economic development.

14% of students prefer evening classes.

More than 10% of students are enrolled exclusively in online classes.
MISSION
To provide innovative educational opportunities to enhance student lives and build stronger communities.

VISION
Kirtland will be the first choice for learner-centered education guiding students and communities toward success.

VALUES

**Excellence:** Expectation that all college activities are conducted with attention to quality and the highest levels of academic and professional standards.

**Inclusiveness:** Conduct the activities of the college in a manner that inspires tolerance and welcomes diversity of people and thought.

**Innovation:** Address challenges and issues from multiple perspectives to solve problems and advance college processes and knowledge. Supporting progressive and meaningful research, creative activity and teaching.

**Reflection:** Evaluate processes and assessing success through honest conversation and the use of data.

**Character:** Steadfast adherence to the principles of integrity, honesty, reliability, transparency and accountability.

**Respect:** Respect for the rights, differences and dignity of others and their contribution to the overall success of the college.