

# FULFILLING OUR FUTURE

Pickens Technical College  
2024-2028 Strategic Plan



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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Stakeholders,

Since 1971, Pickens Technical College has built our legacy by equipping students with the skills necessary to launch successful careers in high-growth, in-demand fields. Our leading Career and Technical Education programs provide graduates with a competitive edge for entering the workforce or continuing their education. Pickens remains dedicated to innovation and committed to providing solutions to industry and community needs. Our students and staff consistently achieve remarkable milestones in academic performance and leadership, reflecting our adaptability in today's dynamic technical education landscape.

To ensure we continue to positively impact both our students and the greater Aurora community, we've developed the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. The Pickens Strategic Plan will prioritize key growth areas and reflect the voices of our diverse community, gathered through extensive research and engagement efforts. It addresses current market trends and critical community needs, ensuring that Pickens stays adaptable in an ever-changing landscape.

The Strategic Plan guides us to focus on fostering a culture of continuous growth and adaptability at Pickens. It prioritizes achieving student and staff success, cultivating an equitable learning environment, leveraging data-driven decision-making, and strengthening community awareness of Pickens' positive contributions.

We are proud to share this Strategic Plan, and we look forward to achieving remarkable milestones together over the next five years.



Warm regards,

Dr. Teina McConnell  
Executive Director  
Pickens Technical College

# OVERVIEW

Building on a strong foundation of technical education excellence since 1971, Pickens Technical College is committed to continuous improvement and community impact. Recognizing the dynamic landscape of industry needs and a thriving Aurora community, we've embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process. This Strategic Plan outlines our vision for the next five years (2024-2028), focusing on key areas for growth and ensuring we remain a leader in delivering high-quality career and technical education.



## PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic planning process aimed to achieve three key objectives:

- **Gather stakeholder input**

Extensive engagement was conducted to capture insights from internal and external partners, ensuring the plan reflects the needs of all stakeholders. These activities included:

- 10 focus groups engaging 35 total individuals (eleven industry partners, twenty Pickens staff members, three peer technical colleges, and one non-Pickens APS staff member).
- A community-wide survey (available in English and Spanish) that received 191 responses.

- **Identify top strategic priorities**

Through a comprehensive analysis, Pickens identified the most critical areas for focus in the coming years.

- **Develop a transparent and inclusive plan**

The process was designed to create a readily understandable document that clearly communicates Pickens' future direction to all impacted internal and external community members and partners.



# STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

Pickens Technical College's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 outlines a comprehensive framework to guide continuous improvement and achieve institutional goals. The plan is built upon two key components:

## 1 ) Guiding Pillars

These five guiding pillars are the foundational principles that will focus Pickens' strategic direction and approach.

**Student & Staff Success**

**Community Awareness & Recognition**

**Growth & Adaptability**

**Equitable Learning Community**

**Data-Informed Decision Making**

## 2 ) Coherent Actions

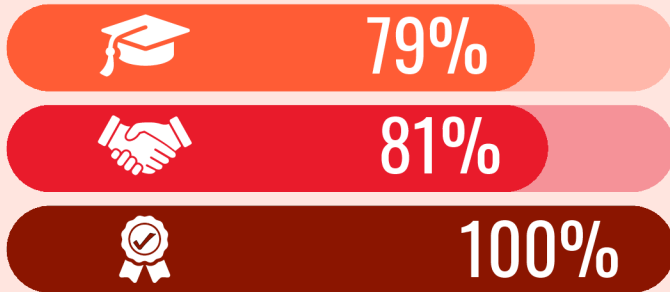
These seven actions describe the ways that Pickens will carry out its Guiding Pillars.

- **Address Systemic Inequities**
- **Build People-Centric Systems**
- **Cultivate Strategic Partnerships**
- **Empower Students to Develop Durable Skills**
- **Expand Authentic Student Experiences & Instructional Models**
- **Invest in Instructor Development**
- **Prioritize Program Viability**



# PICKENS BY THE NUMBERS

## Postsecondary Completion, Placement, and Licensure (CPL) Figures<sup>+</sup>

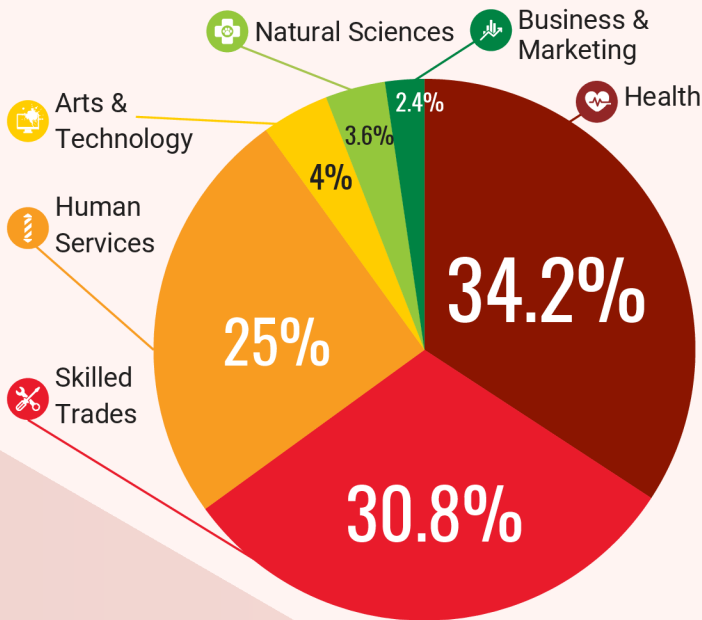


of students complete their CTE program

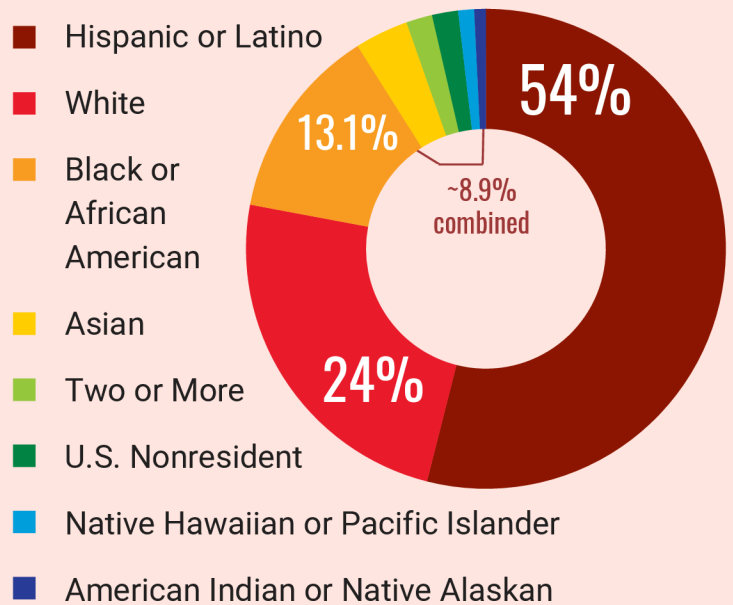
of graduates are placed in a job relevant to their field of study

of completers pass the career and program licensure exam

## Postsecondary Enrollment by Field<sup>+</sup>



## Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Students<sup>\*</sup>



## Key Facts on our Students, Staff and Educators

**97%** Staff retention rate<sup>x</sup>

**92%** Rate of Pickens educators that came from industry<sup>x</sup>

**37%** Rate of students that are concurrent enrollment high schoolers<sup>\*</sup>

**1,300** Annual enrollment of all students<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> IPEDS Fall 2023 Report

<sup>+</sup> CPL 22-23 Data

<sup>x</sup> Calculated on 22-23 Actuals

# PURPOSE, VISION, & MISSION

At Pickens, we feel that a clear understanding of our core identity is central to authentically pursuing our goals. These guiding principles can be found within three foundational concepts: Pickens' purpose, vision, and mission.

Our purpose embodies the "why" – the fundamental reason for our existence and the effects we strive to have on the community. Our vision defines the "what" – the desired future state and the ultimate outcome we aim to achieve for our students. Our mission outlines the "how" – the specific approach we utilize to achieve the vision.

These core principles work in tandem, forming the foundation from which the Strategic Plan builds. The Guiding Pillars and Coherent Actions outlined in this plan create a comprehensive roadmap for pursuing the future, set forth in our purpose, vision, and mission.



## PURPOSE

Our community needs confident and skilled employees to fulfill the evolving demands of business and industry.

## VISION

Pickens Technical College prepares all students for Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR).

## MISSION

To provide unsurpassed, equitable Career and Technical Education.



# GUIDING PILLARS

Pickens' Guiding Pillars focus the overall strategy and approach to addressing the findings and opportunities identified by our stakeholders. These five pillars direct and constrain actions and investments the team will pursue over the next five years. They have been identified as essential and foundational to achieving any short- or long-term goal.



## Student & Staff Success

Pickens fosters a thriving community where students and staff of all backgrounds achieve academic excellence, career readiness, and personal growth. By strengthening support systems, we will provide a leading model for inclusive learning.



## Community Awareness & Recognition

We will increase visibility of the Pickens brand within our communities and showcase the unique career paths and technical skills we offer, making Pickens a recognizable leader in career and technical education.







## Growth & Adaptability

Through a focus on excellence and continuous improvement, Pickens will foster an environment that anticipates industry trends, embraces innovation, leverages technology, and expands opportunities for work-based learning.



## Equitable Learning Community

Rooted in belonging, Pickens is focused on cultivating a dynamic environment that honors the unique identities and experiences of all students and staff. We will translate this commitment into ongoing initiatives that empower individuals to reach their full potential and thrive on their unique paths.



## Data-Informed Decision Making

Pickens will leverage the power of data to continuously improve our programs and student outcomes. We will gather insights into performance metrics, program effectiveness, and industry trends to guide intentional decision-making.



# COHERENT ACTIONS

The Coherent Actions describe the specific ways Pickens will take action to carry out the Guiding Pillars. They are coordinated approaches and resource allocations designed to be accomplished in five years or less. Each Coherent Action supports multiple Guiding Pillars, so as Pickens advances against each one, it will make progress toward multiple established priorities.

## 1 Address Systemic Inequities

Identify and understand systemic barriers within our programs and support systems, and expand initiatives that address these inequities to foster an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all. Communicate the impact of these efforts on our students and staff, sharing both successes and challenges, to continuously improve.

## 2 Build People-Centric Systems

Reinforce and develop organizational systems related to individuals, processes, communication, and technology to increase transparency, empathy, trust, and sense of belonging.

## 3 Cultivate Strategic Partnerships

Through intentional collaboration, support the growth of programs that equip students with the high-demand skills needed for successful careers in emerging fields, leading to impactful outcomes for our graduates.

## 4 Empower Students to Develop Durable Skills

Incorporate opportunities for students to explore and develop essential skills for lifelong success within classrooms, student organizations, and work-based learning. Assess skill mastery to ensure they graduate ready for the future.



## **5 Expand Authentic Student Experiences & Instructional Models**

Collaborate with partners to provide students with enriched learning avenues like apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, and externships. Pilot models of instruction that meet learning needs in an accessible way.

## **6 Invest in Instructor Development**

Be a champion for instructors and staff to find tailored opportunities, own their professional development, and grow within their fields and instructional practices.

## **7 Prioritize Program Viability**

Develop proactive methods to assess program viability and make data-informed decisions, ensuring Pickens offers impactful programs aligned with the greater Aurora community's needs.



# IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

This Strategic Plan serves as the public-facing blueprint for achieving Pickens' vision. To translate these goals into actionable steps, a detailed Implementation Plan will accompany the Strategic Plan. This internal plan will outline targeted tactics corresponding to the Coherent Actions to serve as the practical roadmap for achieving the Strategic Plan's priorities.

To ensure successful execution, the Implementation Plan will be collaborative, data-driven, and adaptable.

- **Collaborative**

A senior leader assumes accountability for ensuring the Strategic Plan is prioritized amidst ongoing operations. Proactive communication strategies will keep stakeholders informed throughout execution.

- **Data-Driven**

SMART success metrics are defined for each task. These metrics will be accompanied by efficient data collection methods enabling regular progress monitoring.

- **Adaptable**

The initial internal roadmap outlines tactics for the first 90 days, fostering concentrated effort on early wins. Ongoing evaluation and a proactive approach enables adjustments for subsequent 90-day increments, ensuring the approach remains responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.

