Community College Local Strategic Value

The Board of Trustees of Southwestern Michigan College confirms that the College has met the best practices identified by the State for providing strategic value to the community. Specific examples are as follows:

Category A-Economic development and business or industry partnerships. ***The College meets 4 out of 5 best practices in this category.***

1. **The community college has active partnerships with local employers including hospitals and health care providers.**

Southwestern Michigan College through its nursing and human services division partners with the following health organizations:

Ascension of Michigan (Borgess)

Beacon Health Systems

Bronson Commons

Bronson Health Care Group

Cartel Inn of Lakeland

Cass County Council on Aging

Cass County Medical Care Facility

Corewell South

Edwardsburg Ambulance

Goshen Health Hospital

Heritage Southwest – Lewis Cass ISD

Jim Gilmore Community Healing Center

Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital

Pace of Southwest Michigan

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center

Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Service (SMACS)

South Bend Clinic (General)

South Bend Clinic (MRI)

South Bend Medical Foundation

St. Joseph Health System

Three Rivers Health

Timbers of Cass County

Westwoods of Bridgman

Westwoods of Niles

Southwestern Michigan College has partnerships with the following area companies in support of the College's intern and apprenticeship programs and who have employees enrolled in specific courses at the College:

1st Source Bank

A+ Window & Door

Auto Value

Basney Honda

Beacon Health System

Berrien County

C & S Machine

Cressy Construction

Crowe LLP

CWU Contractors Inc.

Eagle Technologies

ER General Auto Repair

Fearless Kustoms

Flowers Early Learning

General Stamping and Metalworks

Great Lakes Repair & Towing

Gurley Leep Motorworks

Hanson International

Holtec Decommissioning Intl.

Honors Credit Union

JX Truck Center

Laidig Systems

Lippert Components

McCormick Motors

New Heights Auto Services

Niles Steel Tank

Oselka Constructors Company

Paramount Tool Company

PEI Genesis

Place Homes Inc.

Rescue Team Remodeling

Signature Dealer Group

Southwestern Michigan College (various departments)

TC Scott Construction

Trinity Health Information Services

Walmart

2. **The community college provides customized onsite training for area companies, employees, or both.**

Southwestern Michigan College has historically provided customized on-site training for area businesses for over twenty years. Some of its clients have been the following:

AACOA-Machine Guarding and Hazard Identification

Acemco Automotive-Safety and Health Administrator's Course ACT Test Panels, LLC-Lock-Out/Tag Out

Adrian Steel-Machine Guarding Hazard Identification Advance Packaging- Guards for Power Transmission

All American Exteriors-Lead Safety RRP

Ancast-Lean Systems

Aquatic Company-Lock-Out/Tag Out Artisan Restoration-Lead Safety RRP

Ausco Products-Lock Out/Tag Out Autocast-Rapid Changeover

Beaudoin Electrical Construction-Safety & Health Administrator's Course

Berry Plastics-Lock Out/Tag Out

Blossomland Container Corp.-Guards for Power Transmissions

Bosch Rexroth Corp.-Personal Protective Equipment

Bronson Products-Machine Guarding Hazard Identification

Burnette Foods-Train the Trainer

Cabo Mechanical-Lead Safety RRP Cascade Die Casting-Rapid Changeover

Crystal Flash Energy-Machine Guarding Hazard Identification CTR Construction- Lead Safety RRP

Dee Fry Construction-Lead Safety RRP

Delta Machining Inc.-Ergonomic Principles

Diversified Machine-Six Sigma Green Belt Certification

Eagle Technologies

FAPCO Inc.-Lean Systems

Genzink Steel-Guards for Transmissions

Graphic Packaging International-Train the Trainer

Great Lakes Die Cast-Rapid Changeover GRP 2 Construction-Lead Safety RRP

Hanson International

H.C. Starck Inc.-Ergonomic Principles Heater Stamping-Lock Out/Tag Out 1/N Tek-Basic Welding Phases 1,11 and III Kamax-Train the Trainer

Knape and Vogt-Guards for Transmissions

Lakeshore Engineering-Safety and Health Administrator's Course

Lounsbury Excavating-Personal Protective Equipment

Lyons Industry-Materion Brush Alloys-Rapid Changeover

Metal Components LLC-Train the Trainer

Michiana Window World-Lead Safety RRP

Mid-States Die Cast-Rapid Changeover

Modineer Company-Personal Protective Equipment NADCA-Rapid Changeover

National Airlines-Lock Out/Tag Out

Niles Steel Tank-Ergonomic Principles

Pfizer-Machine Guarding and Hazard Identification

Pilkington-Lock Out/Tag Out

Port City Group-Rapid Changeover

Pratt Industries-Guards for Power Transmission

Premier Tool and Die-Lock Out/Tag Out

Q3 Technologies LLC-Personal Protective Equipment

Richwood Industries-Machine Guarding and Hazard Identification

Robert Bosch-Ergonomic Principles

Shepherd Casters Corporation-Development for Project Teams

Siemans-Train the Trainer

Steinbauer-Engineering

Strive-OSHA 10 Hour for Construction Trades

Stryker Instruments-Management Conflict Facilitation

TDF Contractors-Lead Safety RRP

Dow Corning Corporation-Guards for Transmission

Universal Forest Products-Ergonomic Principles

Vail Rubber Works Inc.-Lock Out/Tag Out

Vickers Engineering-Ergonomic Principles

Vylonis Contracting-Personal Protective Equipment

Whirlpool-Lock Out/Tag Out

Wii-Kast Inc.-Rapid Changeover

During the "great recession," there was an out flux of industry from our local taxpaying district. For this reason, the College no longer has a significant emphasis in on-site customized training.

3. **The community college supports entrepreneurship through small business assistance center or other training or consulting activities targeted toward small business.**

Southwestern Michigan College offers a certificate in Business Management as well as a degree in Business, both of which prepares community members to be successful managing their own businesses.

4. **The community college supports technological advancement through industry partnerships, incubation activities, or operation of a Michigan technical education center or other advanced technology center.**

Southwestern Michigan College operates a Michigan Technical Education Center (M-Tec) on our Niles Campus. When this facility was originally built, the flagship program was die-casting. None-the-less, the facility was designed to be a very flexible training facility that could change functions to meet the changing needs of local industry. This facility currently provides state-of-the-art training in welding as well as robotics.

5. **The community college has active partnerships with local or regional workforce and economic development agencies.**

Southwestern Michigan College partners with the following economic development agencies:

Tri-County Workforce Development Board

Cass County Economic Development Corporation

Berrien County Manufacturers Council

Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce

Cass County Chamber of Commerce

Edwardsburg Chamber of Commerce

Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce

Kinexus

WorkOne Northern Indiana

Buchanan Chamber of Commerce

Category B-Educational Partnerships. ***The College meets all 5 (out of 5) best practices in this category.***

1. **The community college has active partnerships with regional high schools, intermediate school districts, and career-tech centers to provide instruction through dual enrollment.**

Dual Enrolled Students – 2024/2025:

Berrien Springs High School – 55 students
Berrien Springs Virtual Academy – 1 student
Brandywine High School – 9 students
Bridgman High School – 6 students
Buchanan High School – 15 students
Decatur High School – 19 students
Dowagiac Union High School – 88 students
Edwardsburg High School – 124 students

Great Lakes Academy – 1 student
Hartford High School – 10 students
Highpoint Virtual Academy – 1 student
Home School – 16 students
Ignite Christian Academy – 1 student
Lawrence High School – 6 students
Life Tech Academy – 1 student
Marcellus High School – 11 students
Niles Cedar Lane – 3 students
Niles High School – 93 students
River Valley High School – 1 student
Ross Beatty High School – 55 students
Watervliet High School – 40 students
W-A-Y Watervliet – 1 student

Southwestern Michigan College has partnered with Tri-County Head Start by providing a classroom for 30 pre-school children on campus. The relationship not only benefits the Head Start students, but Southwestern Michigan College students enrolled in the Early Childhood curriculum also have observation and internship opportunities.

2. **The community college hosts, sponsors, or participates in enrichment programs for area K-12 students such as college days, summer or after school programming or Science Olympiad.**

For many decades, Southwestern Michigan College has hosted thousands of K-12 students on its campus for tours, open houses and events.

For example, the College annually hosts the Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District's Science Olympiad. During the past few years the College has also held math competitions, spelling bees, robotics teams, and STEM camps for area students. The College has regularly hosted the area band/choir Solo and Ensemble Festivals for area schools.

3. **The community college provides, supports, or participates in programming to promote successful transitions to college for traditional aged students, through programs like Educational Talent Search, a federally funded TRIO program that promotes college readiness in area high schools.**

ETS (Educational Talent Search) is a federally funded TRIO program committed to enhancing and ensuring the academic and personal success of selected eligible students. ETS serves students in 6th-12th grade in Brandywine, Cassopolis, Dowagiac, Edwardsburg and Marcellus school districts. ETS advocates for the successful completion of high school and to advance on to college and/or training after high school. The aim of ETS is to provide opportunities for students to reach their maximum protentional via the following:

1. Monthly meetings for ETS participants at target schools.
2. An ETS advisor in target schools one day a week the entire academic year.
3. College, Career and Social Etiquette workshops in middle school and high school ETS participants.
4. College visits for 9th through 12th graders.
5. Additional Workshops at target schools (based on need) may include, but are not limited to: test taking, college applications, financial aid, scholarship search, job/life skills and ACT/SAT Prep. Includes junior planning nights and senior financial aid nights.
6. Senior one on one help with applications, financial aid, scholarships, etc.
7. Free tutoring for all ETS participants during and after school.
8. Summer camps centered around career exploration and college prep (i.e. Public Safety, STEM, Entrepreneurship, Community Service/Leadership, Michigan College Tour, Outdoor Education/Agricultural Science).
9. Work with community partner agencies to better assist students in all areas of life.
10. Work with alternative programs in target schools to help eligible students receive a diploma/GED and receive help with creating job resumes and college applications.
11. Take students to MI-CAPP Student Leadership Summit for the state and sometimes region to promote TRIO and college success.

4. The community college provides, supports, or participates in programming to promote successful transitions to college for new or reentering adult students by actively, or recruiting and advising adult learners.

Southwestern Michigan College provides placement testing and provides excellent support services to access the best fit courses for each student. In addition, free tutoring is provided at the Carole A. Tate Teaching and Learning Center. Academic advisors help assess a student's educational and career goals to determine a pathway for completion. Students may choose to complete a 2-year occupational program or a certificate for direct employment, or an associate's degree to transfer to a 4-year school for a bachelor's degree The College also has a dedicated admissions advisor for recruiting adult learners.

5. The community college has active partnerships with regional 4-year colleges and universities to promote successful transfer, such as articulation, 2+2, or reverse transfer agreements or operation of a university center.

Students can earn the following BS degrees from Ferris State University on-line:

Accountancy

Business Administration-Generalist

Business Administration-Professional Track

Computer Information Technology

Criminal Justice

Elementary Education

Human Resource Management

A student can also earn the following certificates:

Human Resource Management

These degrees can also be earned with a BAS from Grand Valley State University. We are housing a Grand Valley State University staff on our camps.

Southwestern Michigan College has an articulation agreement with the Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Institute of Agricultural Technology that allows students to earn MSU certificates in Agricultural Operations and Ag Business on our campus, while earning an AAS in Agricultural Technology from SMC.

In addition, Southwestern Michigan College is a member of MACRAO which provides for transfer of credits within the State's Colleges and Universities and has multiple transfer agreements with Michigan and Indiana colleges and universities. The Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) also ensures 30 General Education credits transferring to other Michigan public schools, as well as many private schools. Southwestern Michigan College has reverse transfer agreements with Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, Western Michigan University and Davenport University.

Category C-Community Services. ***The College meets all 5 (out of 5) best practices in this category.***

1. **The community college provides wellness enrichment courses for leisure, wellness, personal enrichment, or professional development.**

Southwestern Michigan College offers the following wellness enrichment courses:

Dance

Kickboxing

Music

Taekwondo

The College offers a changing menu of wellness offerings through the college's fitness center.

2. **The community college operates or sponsors opportunities for community members to engage in activities that promote leisure, wellness, cultural or personal enrichment such as community sports teams, theater or musical ensembles, or artist's guilds.**

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts at SMC is both dynamic and deeply engaged with community outreach. The College typically presents multiple theatrical performances—dramatic works, one acts, musicals—throughout the academic year. Community members can also audition to be part of the College's various instrumental and vocal ensembles, as well as theatrical productions. Several sections of applied music are offered to those with little to no training who are interested in learning basic techniques, as well as those with extensive backgrounds in vocal and instrumental arts, who may be interested in advanced study. Private study is offered for voice, and a variety of instruments including piano, guitar, wind instruments and many more. We also facilitate a community brass band as part of the instrumental ensembles; this band consists chiefly of members from the community and performs in concert with our other symphonic bands.

The College sponsors Steve's Run (proceeds benefit student scholarships and the Mayo Clinic). The annual race is open to community participation.

The College also sponsors Campus Bash, an annual fall welcome back festival, which assists students in transitioning back to campus life. Campus Bash is also open to local businesses to have an information table at which student can learn about service and employment opportunities.

There are several pop-up intramural activities per month that students can choose to participate in. Students will also have the opportunity to take part in different intramural sports throughout the Fall and Spring semesters.

With the return of intercollegiate sports to campus, community members now have the opportunity to support the College by attending or volunteering at basketball and volleyball games, cross country meets and wrestling matches. The College has experienced great involvement by the community in these events.

3. **The community college operates public facilities to promote cultural, educational, or personal enrichment for community members, such as libraries, computer labs, performing arts centers, museums and art galleries.**

Southwestern Michigan College operates the Fred L. Mathews Library and Conference Center that is open to the community. This facility includes a large selection of books and media, which can be checked out by community members. The Library also contains a computer lab and a number of study rooms. In addition, the Library and Conference Center contains meeting rooms that can hold from 30 to 300 people for community events.

The College has a 350 seat theater on campus where community members can attend performances staged by the College's Performing Arts Department and the annual Southwestern Michigan College Holiday Concert featuring the College's instrumental and vocal ensembles. In addition, both the instrumental and voice ensembles perform a number of times each year in the community and at community events.

The College operates an Art Gallery that is open to the community. We hold public receptions for all of our exhibitions (typically 7-8 events over the course of the academic year). The gallery displays student art work as well as the works of featured regional, national and international artists.

4. **The community college operates public facilities to promote leisure or wellness activities for community members, including gymnasiums, athletic fields, hiking or biking trails, or natural areas.**

Southwestern Michigan College operates a fitness center that is available to community members. This facility was expanded and modernized in 2009. Included in this facility are aerobic equipment such as stationery bikes, treadmills, and elliptical machines. Also, the fitness center contains Cybex equipment, hammer strength equipment, and free weights. There are also mats and equipment for floor exercising. We offer both personal training and group fitness classes. The Canyon rock climbing room features a 35-foot rock wall and 12-foot bouldering wall. Also included in this facility is a gymnasium which was remodeled in 2022.

The College maintains public trails through 50 acres of woods on campus that is used for running, hiking, and biking. In the winter the trails are used for cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

In addition, there is a soccer field, a flag football field, and a softball diamond on campus.

5. **The community college promotes, sponsors, or hosts community service activities for students, staff or community members.**

The following community groups utilized Southwestern Michigan College facilities during the academic year 2024-2025:

1st Source – 5 times

Amtrak

Bonnell – 6 times

Cairnstone

CASA

Cassopolis Special Olympics – 13 times

Decatur High School

Diamond Dance

DK Security

Dowagiac High School

Dowagiac Jr Arts

Dowagiac Rotary

Expression Dance

Flowers Early Learning – 19 times

Girls on the Run – 4 times

Greater Niles Chamber – 10 times

HSISD – 21 times

Indiana Michigan Power

Lighthouse Connections Academy

Market One

MARSP

Michigan Connections Academy – 4 times

Michigan Gateway Community Foundation

Miss Dowagiac Pageant – 15 times

New Foundations Community Jail Ministry

Niles High School

PAW – 3 times

SMCAA – 3 times

Toastmasters – 12 times

The College sponsors the following student clubs and organizations, many of which engage in community service projects:

Adventurer's Guild-Purpose: to provide an opportunity for students that love to play board and card games an opportunity to collaborate and play each other.

Alpha Kappa Omega-Purpose: to provide support and Christian fellowship to the students of SMC through regular Bible study meetings and social activities.

Auto Club-Purpose: to bring students together to complete projects or work on vehicles outside of class.

Business Club-Purpose: to promote and enhance students in Business, Accounting and Office Administration fields. The club will promote tomorrow's workforce through advancement of leadership, citizenship and technical skills.

Criminal Justice Club-Purpose: to provide a space for students majoring in or interested in criminal justice to collaborate, study and train for competitions.

IT Club-Purpose: the purpose of the IT club is to provide opportunities for interested students to engage with technology relevant to their professional and social interests. Club projects are run by students and have included designing a high-powered, water-cooled PC; drone piloting and aerial media production; virtual reality demonstrations; trips to conventions; and more.

LGTBQ and Allies Club-Purpose: to provide a safe space for students to be themselves, make connections, learn, and contribute to fostering a positive environment for diversity on campus.

National Student Nurses Association-Purpose: to generate participation and unity in the School of Nursing and Health Services. The purpose of the association is to form professional development and enhancement of student life through extracurricular social and service activities.

Phi Theta Kappa (Sigman PSI Chapter)-Purpose: Phi Theta Kappa is the national honor society of community colleges and recognizes scholarly achievement. Participation is by invitation only. Eligible students (degree seeking students with at least a 3.5 GPA and 12 or more credits in non-developmental course work) will be invited to join in the Fall and Spring semesters.

Psi Beta Club-Purpose: Psi Beta is the national honor society in psychology for community colleges. Psi Beta's mission is to encourage professional development and psychological literacy of all students at two-year colleges through promotion and recognition of excellence in scholarship, leadership, research, and community service. The society functions as an association of chapters operated by Psi Beta students and faculty advisors, coordinated by a national office. Psi Beta participates with Psi Chi, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, APA's Committee on Baccalaureate and Associate Education (CABE), and other psychological organizations at APA, APS, and regional psychology conventions.

Psychology Club-Purpose: is devoted to advanced learning, conversation, and training in the field of psychology. Our goals include:
- Providing opportunities to become acquainted with and involved with the larger field of psychology and how it applies to helping professions, such as psychology, social work, early childhood education, and nursing.
- Providing a forum for developing one's perspective about psychology, as well as for building a sense of community and identity with others in the field, as well as across campus.

- Hosting guest speakers for student career exploration, organizing events to benefit the campus and community through programs and services that support charitable causes, raising social awareness, and encouraging responsibility of students.
- Providing opportunities to students to enhance leadership skills and encourage independent research.
- Providing a greater opportunity for student/faculty interaction outside of the classroom. As members share varied backgrounds, students do not need to be psychology majors to join.

Roadrunner Esports-Purpose: to compete against regional teams in online games such as DOTA, Overwatch, and League of Legends.

Sigma Mu Chi-Purpose: to promote relationships among graduates of police schools, research projects in the field, and a better public understanding of police organizations among other goals.

Sociology Club-Purpose: to provide sociology students with social and academic experiences that enhance and deepen their understanding of the field.

Welcome Week Leaders-Purpose: to serve as peer mentors for incoming students. They lead groups during Welcome Week each fall and spring semester.

September 10, 2025

Southwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Room 2112, David C. Briegel

8 a.m. Regular Meeting

General Business

Members of the Southwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees met on September 10, 2025 for a regularly scheduled meeting.

The meeting was convened at 8:00 a.m. by Board Chairman Tom Jerdon.

Members Present: Tom Jerdon, Beth Cripe, Tracy Hertsel, Skip Dyes

Members Absent: Dr. Elaine Foster, Todd Obren, Becky Moore

Minutes of the August 13, 2025 regular convened meeting required no changes and were placed on file.

Tracy Hertsel moved, seconded by Skip Dyes, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Five individuals were recognized for their service at the College:
Walter Pabis was recognized for his years of service and trustee Beth Cripe presented him with a 5-year pin.
Deirdre Kirk was recognized for her years of service and trustee Skip Dyes presented her with a 10-year pin.
Gail Shirey was recognized for her year of service and trustee Beth Cripe presented her with a 15-year pin.
Eric Clayborn was recognized for his years of service and trustee Tracy Hertsel presented him with a 20-year pin.
Andrew Dohm was recognized for his years of service and trustee Skip Dyes presented him with a 25-year pin.

Public Input

No individual requested to speak.

Other

The Treasurer's Report for the month ending August 31, 2025 was received and placed on file.

Interim President Brewer gave his President's Report. Interim President Brewer reported that "Welcome Week" has been completed, and the fall semester is officially underway. Interim President Brewer discussed the SMC's strategic plan and highlighted the "Top 5 Accomplishments" from the past two years. He began with the Economic Impact Study showing SMC generating a positive economic impact of over $58.4 million per year for the taxing district. Mr. Brewer noted the recent three capital projects with housing, wrestling and the Lyons building and the impact the construction has had on the housing shortage, the growing wrestling program and the upgrades to the arts facilities. Interim President Brewer reported on the enrollment growth in both headcount and contact hours up 11.6% in comparison to a year ago. Brewer discussed the Improvement of Student Success. The success of the Roadrunner Ready

program has led to the institutional funding, highlighting its significant impact on student outcomes from the Summer 2023 cohort to the Summer 2024 cohort. Lastly, Interim President Brewer discussed Enrollment in Academic Programs and the launching of 12 new programs over the past few years. Student enrollment has increased annually, and the trend continues in the new program areas.

Discussion Items

Trustees reviewed the list of gifts given to the Foundation, with four individual donations for a grand total in the amount of $10,500.

Action Items

Skip Dyes moved, seconded by Tracy Hertsel, to approve the Strategic Value to the Community Resolution (attachment 5A). Motion passed unanimously.

Beth Cripe moved, seconded by Tracy Hertsel, to accept with gratitude the gift shown in attachment 5B, with one individual donation in the amount of $1,000. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Follow-up Requests

No follow-up requests were made of the administration.

Adjournment

Tracy Hertsel moved to adjourn at 8:31 a.m. Skip Dyes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Beth Cripe, Secretary

Thomas F. Jerdon, Chairman