

1 **CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES**

2 **The purposes of the first two chapters of this master plan are to identify the District’s benefits and**
3 **successes as well as to analyze the District’s effectiveness in meeting its mission.**

4 The COS mission is:

5 Sequoias Community College District provides excellent higher education in a spirit of equity for our
6 diverse student population. We believe in students achieving their full educational potential and support
7 student success in attaining a variety of degrees and certificates, from basic skills to transfer education
8 and workforce development. (Reaffirmed by the COS Board of Trustees on March 8, 2021.)

9 **Using this mission statement as the benchmark, these chapters provide evidence of some of the**
10 **District’s successes and benefits**

- 11 • The District’s geographic region is projected to increase in population and that projection includes
12 sustained growth in the volume of residents of college-going ages through 2030. (Data Set 1 and
13 Data Set 2)
- 14 • The proportion of Hispanic residents in the District’s geographic region is projected to increase
15 from 2020 to 2040. (Data Set 3)
- 16 • Tulare County has a greater proportion of residents who speak a language other than English
17 while at home when compared to California as a whole, while Kings County has a smaller
18 proportion when compared to the state. (Data Set 4)
- 19 • Employment growth is projected for the District’s geographic region. (Data Set 7)
- 20 • The District total FTES decreased from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, but the District total FTES are
21 projected to steadily increase through 2035. (Data Set 10b, and Data Set 10c)
- 22 • Credit Enrollments in Online courses substantially increased from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, and the
23 proportion of students enrolled in an online course is substantially greater in Fall 2022 when
24 compared to Fall 2018. (Data Set 12 and Data Set 15)
- 25 • District students are younger than the statewide student population, with 73% of the District’s
26 students aged 24 years old or younger at all three District sites, compared to 60% of students in
27 that age cohort statewide. A greater proportion of the District’s students identify as Hispanic
28 when compared to the statewide student population. (Data Set 16 and Data Set 18)
- 29 • College of the Sequoias has higher persistent rates than the statewide averages in four of the past
30 five academic years. (Data Set 21)
- 31 • From 2018 to 2022, the rates at which COS students earn passing grades are comparable to the
32 statewide average for the same semesters. (Data Set 21)
- 33 • COS students consistently transfer or earn an award at slightly higher rates than the statewide
34 average, and COS students successfully complete transfer-level math and English at a higher rate
35 than the statewide average. (Data Set 21)
- 36 • From Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, students in online and hybrid courses have consistently lower success
37 rates and higher withdrawal rates when compared to students in face-to-face courses (Data Set 22
38 and Data Set 23).
- 39 • The successful course completion rates for COS students decreased from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022,
40 across all age groups, unit loads, and race/ethnic groups except Multi-ethnic students and
41 students with an unknown race/ethnicity. (Data Set 24, Data Set 25, and Data Set 26)

- 42 • Most community members had at least some knowledge about COS, and community members
43 had a more favorable view of COS when compared to Fresno State, CSU system, UC system and
44 Cal State Bakersfield. (Data Set 28 and Data Set 29)
- 45 • Community members believed increasing 4-year university options in the area would help the
46 local economy and local property values. Community members believed that a 4-year degree
47 option close to the area was needed. (Data Set 30).
- 48 • In both 2021 and 2023, balancing work with school, finances, and balancing family with school
49 were the most challenging issues for COS students. Even though the top challenges remained the
50 same, the proportion of students indicating these issues were “very challenging” decreased from
51 2021 to 2023. (Data Set 31 and Data Set 32)

52 In order to identify its current and anticipated challenges, the District analyzed the information in these
53 two chapters by:

- 54 • Comparing its current status to its mission (internal scans) in order to identify current challenges
55 and
- 56 • Studying projected demographics, legislative, and economic changes (external scans) in order to
57 anticipate the challenges that the District will be called upon to address in the coming decade.

58 Based on this analysis and feedback gathered at the October 27, 2023, 2025-2035 District-wide Master
59 Plan Summit, the District identified the following current and anticipated challenges:

60

61 To fulfill its mission, College of the Sequoias must

62 **CHALLENGE #1: Provide equitable access across all District campuses to meet local community needs.**

63 Increasing access to meet community needs is a focus of state and local attention. Specifically, the
64 purpose of Vision 2030 Goal 2: Equity in Access is to “*Increase with equity the number of students
65 attending a California community college, with particular emphasis on the number of underserved
66 Californians.*” ([https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-
67 for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013](https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013))

68 To ensure equitable access to education that meets the local community’s needs, COS must focus on
69 meeting population growth and labor market/workforce demands as well as identifying underserved
70 groups in the local community.

71 **Population Growth**

72 Over the next ten years, enrollment at COS is projected to increase by 1% each year (Data Set 10c). This
73 projection is based on an analysis of the previous 10 years in which an average 0.98% increase in FTES
74 per year was observed as well as demographic projections for Tulare and Kings Counties.

75 The District’s service area is encompassed in Tulare and Kings Counties, both of which are projected to
76 experience population growth from 2020 to 2035 (Data Set 1). Tulare County is projected to increase
77 from 480,788 in 2020 to 535,463 in 2035 (+11.1%). Kings County is projected to increase from 154,745 in
78 2020 to 171,517 in 2035 (+10.8%). Additionally, the volume of college-aged individuals (18-24 years old)
79 in both Tulare (+11.4%) and Kings (+23.5%) Counties is projected to increase, while the proportion of
80 college-aged individuals remains similar in both counties (Data Set 2). Due to this and the fact that a

81 majority (72.5%) of COS students are 24 years old or younger (Data Set 16), student demand throughout
82 the District is projected to increase. However, the decrease in 5-17-year old age group in both counties
83 may impact future demand from K-12 students (Data Set 2).

84 Hispanic students accounted for 71.0% of the Fall 2020 COS student population, but only accounted for
85 63.5% of Tulare County and 53.2% of Kings County residents in 2020 (Data Sets 3 & 18). Additionally,
86 from 2020 to 2030, the Hispanic population is projected to increase by 10% in Tulare County and 9% in
87 Kings County (Data Set 3). The projected increase in the Hispanic population in the area is more likely to
88 increase student demand for COS, as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

89 From 2020 to 2040, college-aged individuals are projected to increase in both Kings County and Tulare
90 County, with Kings County projected to have a substantial increase (+16.7%) among 18 -24-year old age
91 group (Data Set 2). Hanford, the county seat and largest city in Kings County, ranks 3rd in student
92 headcount based on city of residence (Data Set 13). Given the projected increase in college-aged
93 individuals and that individuals living in Hanford account for approximately 8% of the COS student
94 population, student demand for courses at the Hanford campus may also increase.

95 ***COS Growth***

96 Over the past five years (2018 – 2022), the District's total headcount grew by 3.7% while California
97 Community Colleges as a whole experienced a 19% decrease (Data Set 10a). While the number of
98 students enrolled in credit courses (-2%) and FTES (-6%) declined from 2018-2022, both increased over
99 the past year (Data set 10b & Data Set 12). As headcounts and FTES have trended upward over the past
100 year, student demand is projected to increase.

101 In Fall 2022, residents of the COS School Facility Improvement District #2 (Visalia, Cutler-Orosi,
102 Farmersville, Exeter, and Woodlake Unified School Districts) passed Measure C, which will allow the
103 District to facilitate the offering of Bachelor's and Master degrees through partnerships with four-
104 year universities (Chapter 1). Additionally, a poll conducted by FM3 Research, showed that
105 residents had knowledge of COS and more favorable opinions of COS when compared to local 4-
106 year universities (Data Sets 28 & 29). Residents also believed that better 4-year degree options
107 were needed for the area and improving 4-year degree options in the area would help the local
108 economy and property values (Data Set 30). Since the community has expressed favorable opinions
109 of COS and a desire for better 4-year degree options in the area and COS is expanding 4-year degree
110 options via partnerships, student demand is projected to increase.

111 ***Labor Market/Workforce Demands***

112 In addition to population growth, labor market/workforce demands will influence the local community
113 educational needs. Less than half of Kings County and Tulare County residents over the age of 25 have at
114 least some college education, and many of the largest and/or fastest growing occupations in the area
115 (Heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers, teachers, teaching assistants, accountants, Licensed Vocation
116 Nurse, Registered Nurse, Nursing Assistants, etc.) requires at least some post-secondary education (Data
117 Sets 5a, 7 & 8). To meet the labor market/workforce demands of the local community, increased
118 enrollment, specifically in programs related to the largest/fastest growing employment
119 opportunities, is needed.

120 COS has added/in the process of adding new CTE programs to the Hanford and Tulare campuses
121 (Chapter 1). One such program, beginning in Summer 2024 at the Hanford Campus, is the
122 paramedic program, which assists in meeting labor market demands as paramedic is one of the
123 fastest growing occupations in Tulare County (Data Set 7). The addition and expansion of COS
124 programs is needed to meet the labor market/workforce demands of the local community.

125 In addition, Vision 2030 specifically mentions expanding access to health care pathway programs
126 such as nursing and mental and behavioral health, which are listed in the fastest and/or largest
127 growing occupations for both Tulare and Kings Counties (Data Sets 7 & 8).

128 ***Underserved Populations within the Local Community***

129 To align with Vision 2030, COS must increase educational access to underserved populations within
130 the local community. Vision 2030 specifically discusses increasing educational access for low-
131 income learners. Tulare and Kings Counties have higher rates of families below the poverty line and
132 a smaller proportion of adult residents with postsecondary education when compared to California
133 as a whole (Data Set 5a & 6a). Additionally, weekly median income is shown to increase with
134 educational attainment. Therefore, expanding educational access to low-income individuals is
135 important to meet local community needs (Data Set 9).

136

137 **CHALLENGE #2: Improve student success for our diverse student population**

138 Improving student success outcomes for our diverse student population is a focus of state and local
139 attention. Specifically, the purpose of Vision 2030 Goal 1: Equity in Success is to “*Ensure the academic
140 and career success of all Californians who are current and prospective California community college
141 students.*” ([https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-
142 California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013](https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013))

143 To ensure academic and career success for students, COS must focus on improving various student
144 success outcomes across the diverse student population.

145 ***Course Success Rates***

146 From 2018/2019 through 2020/2021, course success rates for COS students were the same or higher
147 than course success rates for all California Community College students. However, 2021/2022 course
148 success rates for COS students were slightly below the course success rates for all California Community
149 College students (Data Set 21).

150 From Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, course success rates decreased for all race/ethnic groups except students
151 who identified as multi-ethnic and students whose race/ethnicity was not provided (unknown). Asian,
152 Filipino, Pacific Islander, and White students consistently had course success rates higher than the
153 District average, and African American, Native American, and Hispanic students as well as students
154 whose race/ethnicity was not provided (unknown) consistently had course success rates lower than the
155 District average (Data Set 24).

156 From Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, course success rates decreased for all age groups. During the same time
157 period, students younger than 20, 30-49 years old, and 50 or older consistently had course success rates

158 higher than the District average. In addition, students 20-29 years old consistently had course success
159 rates lower than the District average (Data Set 25).

160 From Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, the proportion of part-time students increased. In Fall 2022, 60% of COS
161 students took fewer than 12 units per semester, and part-time students consistently had lower course
162 success rates than full-time students. (Data Sets 14 & 26)

163 With overall course success rates declining, and course success rates for specific populations
164 consistently falling below the District average, improving course success rates among COS's diverse
165 student population is essential to achieve overall academic success.

166 ***Transfer Level Math & English***

167 With the implementation of new placement policies in Fall 2019 resulting from AB 705 legislation, all
168 COS students are given the opportunity to enroll in transfer-level math and English courses. Since the
169 implementation of these placement policies, 77% - 86% of first-time students are placed into English 001
170 without support, and as of Fall 2021, 100% of COS students are eligible to take at-least one transfer-level
171 math course without support (Data Set 20). Additionally, the rates of students completing transfer-level
172 math and English within their first year doubled from 7% in 2017-2018 to 14% in 2021-2022 (Data Set
173 21). While increases in transfer-level math and English completion rates are promising, continued
174 improvement in transfer-level math and English is important to promote overall academic success
175 among COS students.

176 ***Degree/Certificate Completion***

177 Kings (47.4%) and Tulare (46.1%) Counties have lower rates of residents with at least some college
178 education when compared to California as a whole (63.8%). These rates fall below the California
179 Governor's goal in which 70% of residents obtain a postsecondary degree and/or certification by 2030
180 (Data Set 5a, Vision 2030 & Chapter 1). These education attainment rates also fall below the projected
181 educational attainment levels needed to sustain workforce/labor market needs. Between 2021 and
182 2031, 2,169,000 jobs are projected to open annually in California due to the creation of new positions
183 and replacement openings. Of the new and replacement positions an estimated 67% will require
184 postsecondary credentials, and in 2031 it is projected that 67% of all jobs in California will require some
185 postsecondary training beyond high school, with 30% requiring some college or an Associate's degree.
186 (https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Projections_2031-State-Report.pdf).

187 From 2018/2019 through 2021/2022, COS had a higher rate of students who attained the vision goal
188 definition of completion when compared to all students enrolled at California Community Colleges.
189 However, the rate of COS students achieving this outcome is still low (8% - 12%) (Data Set 21).
190 Additionally, the number of degrees issued by COS slightly declined from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (-
191 0.2%), but the number of students receiving a degree increased by 9.5% over the same time period
192 (Data Sets 27a & 27b). In addition, the number of certificates issued (-34.2%) and certificate recipients (-
193 31.1%) decreased from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (Data Sets 27a & 27c). While the increases in degree
194 recipients and proportion of students achieving the vision goal definition of completion is notable, the
195 completion rate is unlikely to meet projected workforce/labor market needs. To meet the Vision 2030
196 benchmark, which calls for a 30% increase in students completing a certificate, associate degree or
197 baccalaureate degree, completion rates must improve.

198 ***Transfer to a Four-Year Institution***

199 Only 15.2% of Tulare County residents and 14.3% of Kings County residents have a Bachelor’s degree or
200 higher and the low proportion of residents with a Bachelor’s degree poses an issue because by 2031, it is
201 projected that 37% of all jobs in California will require a Bachelor’s degree or higher (Data Sets 5a &
202 https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Projections_2031-State-Report.pdf).

203 While COS students transfer at similar rates to all California Community College students, less than 10%
204 of COS students enrolled in a given academic year transfer to a four-year institution, and only 20-22% of
205 COS students transfer to a four-year institution within three years of beginning at COS (Data Set 21 &
206 Student Equity Dashboard). This transfer rate is unlikely to meet projected workforce/labor market
207 needs and will need to increase to meet the Vision 2030 benchmark, which calls for a 20% increase in
208 the number of students who transfer to a CSU or UC.

209

210 **CHALLENGE #3: Align academic offerings and provide equitable student support services to respond to**
211 **the needs of our diverse student population.**

212 Aligning academic programs, educational resources, and student support services to meet the needs of
213 diverse student populations is a focus of state and local attention. Specifically, the purpose of Vision
214 2030 Goal 3: Equity in Support is to “Partner with other systems, agencies, institutions and community-
215 based organizations to provide students the academic, financial and social supports necessary to thrive
216 by taking education opportunities and the accompanying support to Californians.”
217 (<https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013>). To ensure
218 our academic programs and student support services meet the needs of our students, COS must identify
219 student needs and barriers to academic success and align programs and services accordingly.
220

221 ***Academic Offerings***

222 Demand for online and hybrid courses has remained higher than pre-pandemic levels, and it will likely
223 sustain or increase (Data Sets 23 & 15). Specifically, student headcounts, FTES, and credit enrollments
224 for online courses have substantially increased from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022, and student headcounts for
225 hybrid courses has increased over the same time period (Data Sets 10a, 10b, 12 & 15).

226 In Fall 2020, 60% of COS students were enrolled part-time (Data Set 15). The need to work may
227 contribute to the high portion of COS students who enroll part-time, especially considering that
228 balancing work with school was endorsed by students in both 2021 and 2023 as the most challenging
229 educational obstacle/issue. This is a concern for student success in two ways: (1) fewer units per
230 semester are linked to lower likelihood of completing degrees, certificates, and transfer requirements,
231 and (2) part-time students have lower course success rates when compared to full-time students (Data
232 Set 26). Vision 2030 suggests increasing flexibility in term structure and scheduling as ways to promote
233 increased “full-time course intensity” among working students. (<https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/Vision-2030-A-Roadmap-for-California-Community-Colleges.pdf?la=en&hash=3B83F5221C4A7A8BEFA7E94D5BCBF540D2718013>).

236 Ensuring access to rigorous and quality academic programs that offer flexibility in modality and
237 scheduling is important to meeting the educational needs of the diverse student population COS serves.

238 ***Academic Resources***

239 Although course success rates for online courses have remained the same from Fall 2018 to Fall 2022
240 and course success rates for hybrid courses has slightly increased over the same time period, these
241 instruction modalities have lower course success rates when compared to face-to-face instruction. To
242 assist students in succeeding, COS students need access to equitable academic resources regardless of
243 instruction modality.

244 From 2017/2018 through 2021/2022, the proportions of Kings County (33% to 42%) and Tulare County
245 (32% to 37%) 12th grade graduates who completed all courses required for UC and/or CSU entrance
246 have consistently been below the state rates, which ranged from 40% to 52%. Therefore, to assist
247 students in succeeding, many students coming from high schools in the COS service area will need
248 academic resources to meet them where they are.

249 Ensuring students have equitable access to academic resources, regardless of modality, which meet
250 them where they are is important to meeting the educational needs of the diverse student population
251 COS serves.

252 ***Student Support Services***

253 To provide equitable support that responds to the needs of our diverse student population, the District
254 must align its student support services. Multiple demographic variables, which intersect to inform our
255 students' identities are summarized below.

256 *Income and Poverty Rates*

257 The income for many residents within the District's geographic boundaries is noticeably below poverty
258 level. The statewide family income is significantly higher than the median and mean family income levels
259 for residents in Tulare and Kings Counties. In addition, Tulare and Kings Counties both exhibit poverty
260 levels above California. For example, Tulare County's poverty rate (16.4%) is nearly double the statewide
261 poverty level (9%). In both Kings and Tulare Counties, families with female householders with no spouse
262 present have a poverty level above 30% compared to the statewide average of 21% (Data Sets 6a & 6b).

263 *Linguistic Diversity*

264 The percentage of language other than English spoken at home in Tulare County (51%) is higher than the
265 rates of Kings County (42%) and California (44%). Of the languages other than English spoken at home,
266 Spanish is the most prevalent (Data Set 4).

267 *First-Generation College Status*

268 While the proportion of first-generation college students (parents with high school education or below)
269 enrolled at COS has declined since Fall 2018, first-generation students still account for nearly half (43%)
270 of the COS student population in Fall 2022 (Data Set 19). Additionally, in Fall 2022, COS had a higher
271 proportion of first-generation students when compared to all California Community Colleges combined
272 (31%).

273 *Barriers to Students' Educational Pursuits*

274 To align student support services to meet the needs of our diverse student population, the District must
275 also understand students' barriers to educational success. Below is an overview of obstacles students
276 reported as being "very challenging" to their educational pursuits.

277 In both the Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 administrations of the Student Support Services Survey, the top
278 four obstacles/issues to students' educational pursuits were 1) balancing work and school, 2)
279 financial/money issues, 3) balancing family and school, and 4) medical/mental health issues. However,
280 the percentage of students reporting these issues as "Very challenging" decreased from 2021 to 2023
281 (Data Sets 31a, 31b & 32). In 2023, 21% of respondents reported balancing work with school and
282 financial issues as very challenging, while 14% reported balancing work with family as very challenging.
283 Medical/mental health issues were reported as very challenging by 9% of the respondents. The other
284 obstacles reported as very challenging to students' educational pursuits were transportation issues (6%),
285 childcare issues (6%), food insecurity (5%), computer/internet issues (3%), and housing instability (3%).

286 The demographic characteristics of COS students intersect to display a multifaceted student profile in
287 which nearly half of COS students have parents/guardians with no postsecondary experience and many
288 are living in households with poverty. When parents/guardians possess little/no postsecondary
289 education, they often cannot provide effective guidance to their children's academic and educational
290 success. Additionally, living in low-income and low-resources households may require our students to
291 dedicate resources, including time and energy, to their families through part-time employment and/or
292 increased household responsibilities. This notion was supported by balancing school with work and
293 family as well as financial issues being top challenges our students face. The demographic characteristics
294 highlighted above intersect and contribute to the educational obstacles/challenges faced by our
295 students, and in turn limits students' abilities to overcome the burdening realities of under-education
296 and poverty. (Data Sets 4, 6a, 6b, 19,31a, 31b, 32)

297

298 **CHALLENGE #4: Continuously improve our policies, practices, and systems to provide a quality**
299 **affordable education and support the community we serve.**

300 Based on discussions, comments, and feedback gathered at the October 27, 2023, 2025-2035 District-
301 wide Master Plan Summit, which was attended by more than 100 participants/contributors representing
302 the COS faculty, staff, students and Board, an additional challenge was identified. To continue providing
303 a quality affordable education and support our diverse community, COS must engage in continuous
304 improvement efforts district-wide in developing and implementing policies, business practices and
305 maintaining operational systems. The continuous improvement efforts discussed were 1) Navigating the
306 impact of legislation such as AB 705, AB 1705, and CalGETC of students' educational experiences, 2)
307 Engaging in professional development opportunities to promote best practices in higher education, 3)
308 Reviewing the scope of research to better identify data needs in support of the District's mission, and 4)
309 Navigate the state/local economy by examining and incorporating economic forecasts into the District's
310 plans.

311

312 The next step is for the District to develop District Goals that describe how it intends to address the
313 identified current and anticipated challenges.

314 **DISTRICT GOALS**

315 **Mission Statement**

316 Sequoias Community College District provides excellent higher education in a spirit of equity for our
317 diverse student population. We believe in students achieving their full educational potential and support
318 student success in attaining a variety of degrees and certificates, from basic skills to transfer education
319 and workforce development. (Reaffirmed by the COS Board of Trustees on March 8, 2021.)

320 **DISTRICT GOALS 2025-2035**

321 ***DISTRICT GOAL I.*** College of the Sequoias will increase student enrollment relative to population growth
322 and labor market/workforce demands, with an intentional emphasis on underserved populations within
323 our community.

324 ***DISTRICT GOAL II.*** College of the Sequoias will improve student success (e.g. transfer, learning, and
325 achievement outcomes.) for all students represented within our diverse student population.

326 ***DISTRICT GOAL III.*** College of the Sequoias will make ongoing efforts to provide equitable academic
327 offerings and student support services in response to the diverse needs of our students.

328 ***DISTRICT GOAL IV.*** College of the Sequoias will engage in efforts to continuously improve our policies,
329 practices, and systems to ensure we provide a high quality and affordable education to the community
330 we serve.

331

332 **OVERVIEW**

333 This Master Plan is based on an analysis of the current programs and services and how well the
334 institution has performed in fulfilling our Mission. It is also based on an analysis of the District's position
335 in the state, and campus and community members' input, perceptions and vision for the future. The
336 analysis in the previous chapter highlighted four primary challenges the institution needs to address to
337 adhere to its mission.

338 **CHALLENGE #1:**

339 Provide equitable access across all District campuses to meet local community needs.

340 **CHALLENGE #2:**

341 Improve student success for our diverse student population

342 **CHALLENGE #3:**

343 Align academic offerings and provide equitable student support services to respond to the needs of our
344 diverse student population.

345

346

347 **CHALLENGE #4:**

348 Continuously improve our policies, practices, and systems to provide a quality affordable education and
349 support the community we serve.

350 Based on steps identified in *Data-Informed Goal Development for the College of the Sequoias Master*
351 *Plan 2025-2035*, the four District Goals were initially developed by a six-member brainstorming group,
352 represented by the Research Office, IPEC, and Master Plan Taskforce, in January 2024. Furthermore, the
353 goals were refined with input from the Master Plan Taskforce and feedback gathered from COS
354 community members via an open forum. **Although the goals are numbered, the numbers do not convey**
355 **a priority status; each goal is of equal priority.**

356

357 **GOAL I**

358 **I. College of the Sequoias will increase student enrollment relative to population growth and**
359 **labor market/workforce demands, with an intentional emphasis on underserved populations within**
360 **our community.**

361 To promote equitable access to higher education that meet the community needs, COS must increase
362 student enrollment relative to population growth and labor market/workforce demands and make an
363 intentional effort to increase student enrollment among underserved population within our community.

364 Over the next ten years, enrollment at COS is projected to increase by 1% each year. Based on increases
365 in both headcounts and FTES over the past year and projected increases in the number of college-aged
366 individuals (18-24 years old) in both Tulare and Kings Counties, student demand is projected to increase.
367 The projected increase in the Hispanic population in the area is more likely to increase student demand
368 for COS, as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

369 COS is continuing to grow. The addition of the University Center expands 4-year degree options via
370 partnerships with local universities. Given that the community has expressed more favorable
371 opinions of COS in comparison to local 4-year universities, and community members have voiced a
372 desire for better 4-year degree options in the area, student demand is projected to increase.

373 Vision 2030 calls for increased educational access to underserved populations. Therefore, intentional
374 efforts to recruit and enroll members from these groups are essential.

375 Efforts to increase enrollment, specifically in programs related to the largest/fastest growing
376 employment opportunities, are necessary to meet labor market/workforce demands of the local
377 community.

378 This goal provides evidence for the District's commitment to increasing educational access and
379 enrollment to meet labor market/workforce demands and local community needs.

380

381 **GOAL II**

382 **II. College of the Sequoias will improve student success (e.g. transfer, learning, and achievement**
383 **outcomes) for all students represented within our diverse student population.**

384 To ensure students reach their full educational potential, COS must focus on improving student success
385 across our diverse student population.

386 Specifically, overall course success rates have declined, and course success rates for specific populations
387 consistently fall below the District average. Additionally, even with promising increases in transfer-level
388 math and English completion rates, most of COS students do not complete this requirement by the end
389 of their first year. Furthermore, while COS has seen increases in degree recipients and the proportion of
390 students achieving the vision goal definition of completion over the past five years, and COS students
391 transfer at similar rates to all California Community College students, COS's degree/certificate
392 completion rate as well as our transfer rate are not likely to meet projected workforce/labor market
393 needs. Therefore, to ensure COS students are reaching their full educational potential, COS will engage
394 in intentional efforts to improve course success rates, transfer-level math and English completion,
395 degree/certificate completion, and transfer outcomes among COS's diverse student population.

396 This goal provides evidence for the District's commitment to improving student success for our diverse
397 student population.

398

399 **GOAL III**

400 **III. College of the Sequoias will make ongoing efforts to provide equitable academic offerings and**
401 **student support services in response to the diverse needs of our students.**

402 To ensure students have equitable access to a rigorous, culturally-responsive education and the
403 supports needed to reach their full educational potential, COS must align academic offerings and
404 student support services with the needs of our diverse student population.

405 COS must provide access to quality academic programs that offer flexibility in modality and scheduling
406 to meet the educational needs of the diverse student population COS serves. Specifically, the demand
407 for online and hybrid courses as well as meeting the scheduling needs of our part-time students, many
408 of whom are trying to balance work and school, must be addressed while also considering success rates.

409 Given the lower course success rates for online and hybrid courses when compared to face-to-face
410 courses and the low rate of Kings and Tulare Counties 12th grade graduates completing all courses
411 required for UC and/or CSU entrance, COS must provide access to quality academic resources regardless
412 of modality, and these resources must be tailored to students' differing levels of academic
413 preparedness.

414 Many COS students come from low-income households where English is the second language, and a
415 majority of our students are first-generation college students. Additionally, COS students face a
416 multitude of educational barriers/challenges with the most challenging being balancing work and
417 school, financial/money issues, balancing family and school, and medical/mental health issues. Other
418 challenges faced by COS students included transportation issues, childcare issues, food insecurity,

419 computer/internet issues, and housing instability. Therefore, COS must provide access to student
420 support services that respond to our students' intersecting identities (multiple demographic
421 characteristics) which can intensify educational obstacles/challenges.

422 This goal provides evidence for the District's commitment to providing academic offerings and student
423 support services that are responsive to our students' needs.

424

425 **GOAL IV**

426 **IV. College of the Sequoias will engage in efforts to continuously improve the District's policies,**
427 **practices, and systems to ensure we provide a high quality and affordable education to the**
428 **community we serve.**

429 To ensure COS continues to provide an excellent higher education in a spirit of equity for our diverse
430 student population, the District must engage in continuous improvement efforts.

431 The continuous improvement efforts discussed at the 2025-2035 District-wide Master Plan Summit
432 included navigating the impact of legislation, engaging in professional development opportunities,
433 identifying data needed to support the District's mission, and navigating the state/local economy.

434 This goal provides evidence for the District's commitment to continuously improve the District's policies,
435 practices, and systems to ensure we provide a quality affordable education.

436