

Final as amended 6-04-09
by Executive Committee

Midwestern Higher Education Compact 2009-2011 Strategic Plan

Advancing Education Through Cooperation

Overview

The opening statement in the statute enacted into law in the twelve member states of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact states:

The purpose of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact is to provide greater higher education opportunities and services in the Midwestern region, with the aim of furthering regional access to, research in and choice of higher education for the citizens residing in the several states which are parties to the compact.

To this end, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) strives to improve access to and the quality of higher education for all individuals seeking knowledge, skills and training – regardless of age, background or ethnicity. Led by dedicated legislators and higher education leaders from its 12 member states, the compact is able to leverage its expertise, influence and size to benefit both higher education institutions and the students they serve.

Over the past three years, MHEC has moved quickly to expand its programs, serve member states in innovative ways and increase its participation in regional organizations and initiatives. During the next three years, MHEC's priorities will focus on bringing together leaders and experts to address important and emerging issues in higher education. By focusing on policy and by building stronger relationships, MHEC will be able to strengthen its contributions to the vitality of the Midwest.

Promise

MHEC contributes to the vitality of the Midwest by enhancing member states' ability to maximize higher education opportunity and performance through collaboration and resource sharing.

We deliver this promise through three core functions of student access, cost savings and policy research that

- promote improved student access, affordability and completion;
- reduce operational costs;
- analyze public policy and facilitate information exchange;
- enhance regional higher education cooperation and dialogue; and
- encourage quality programs and services.

Vision

MHEC will be the Midwest's premier resource for higher education collaboration, transformation, resource sharing and information.

Three-year Goal

To advance the vision and fulfill the promise by strengthening MHEC's ability to serve member states by convening and engaging state, regional and national leaders more effectively and expanding the core functions.

Objectives and Priorities

1. To optimize MHEC's core functions

1.1 Enhance programs for students and learners throughout their lives.

- 1.11 Assess the Midwest's need for additional student access programs.
- 1.12 Expand state and institutional participation in the Midwest Student Exchange Program and the e-Transcript Initiative.
- 1.13 Design and implement MHEC's future strategy for student programs, using the Student Access Advisory Committee more actively.

1.2 Increase cost savings for states.

- 1.21 Launch energy savings programs.
- 1.22 Launch health insurance programs.
- 1.23 Evaluate and enhance existing programs; increase resources to support programs as appropriate.
- 1.24 Explore new programs and strategies.
- 1.25 Collaborate with more institutions and state agencies to expand their successful programs across the region.

1.3 Expand MHEC policy research.

- 1.31 Establish an annual policy agenda
- 1.32 Regularly survey and assess best practices in higher education and disseminate relevant information to MHEC constituents.
- 1.33 Produce a signature research study annually.
- 1.34 Enhance annual policy briefs and state reports on trends and indicators.
- 1.35 Secure additional external funding.
- 1.36 Explore new programs and strategies.
- 1.37 Customize data to increase usability for various audiences.

We will have succeeded when....

- All twelve states participate in the Midwest Student Exchange program, and at least half of the states participate in the e-Transcript initiative.
- MHEC research is read and used by policymakers, reporters, higher education leaders and others.
- MHEC is recognized for the state policy indicators, which will be presented annually in all the states.
- External funding to support research and programs reaches \$1 million per year.
- Three new cost savings programs have been launched.
- Institutional participation in cost savings programs increases 20%; total regional cost savings have increased 30%.

2. *To address emerging and critical higher education issues by convening and building relationships with regional and national leaders and organizations*

- 2.1 Identify ways to use MHEC's power to convene regional and national leaders around strategic higher education initiatives.
- 2.2 Host policy summits and programmatic workshops.
- 2.3 Increase opinion leader understanding of and participation in MHEC.
 - 2.31 Raise MHEC's visibility with higher education system leaders, student leaders and college and university presidents/chancellors.
 - 2.32 Work more closely with P-20 council leaders.
 - 2.33 Identify and build relationships with key economic development, business and community leaders in Midwest states.
 - 2.34 Identify opportunities for collaboration with regional and national educational organizations.
- 2.4 Recruit additional partners and sponsors.
- 2.5 Strengthen distribution and use of findings/recommendations from MHEC events.
- 2.6 Engage student leaders in MHEC more effectively
- 2.7 Identify ways to strengthen the executive and volunteer leadership capacity of higher education institutions and systems.

We will have succeeded when....

- MHEC is invited by key organizations to participate in their important initiatives and strategies.
- Others ask MHEC to convene meetings and conferences around emerging issues.
- Findings and recommendations are published in the media.
- Commission events are sponsored.
- MHEC commission and program committee meetings regularly include sponsored events.
- At least 50 students participate in MHEC initiatives (in addition to those participating in student access programs).

3. *To broaden MHEC's policy involvement*

- 3.1 Develop guiding principles for MHEC's policy involvement strategy.
- 3.2 Develop strategies to engage governors (and their staffs) and state and federal policy makers and their staffs more effectively.
- 3.3 Stimulate conversations and convene focused dialogues with policy makers and their staffs about emerging issues.
- 3.4 Expand the ways MHEC informs policy discussions. (e.g., testimony).
- 3.5 Explore developing model legislation where appropriate.
- 3.6 Increase visibility for MHEC's policy research capability.

We will have succeeded when....

- Guiding principles frame and drive MHEC's broader policy involvement strategy.
- MHEC is called on regularly by policy makers and their staffs as an expert resource on higher education issues.
- Governors' staffs and legislators are advocates for MHEC.
- Research presentations are made in each state.
- MHEC has established criteria to guide decisions about whether to introduce model legislation.
- MHEC is called on to conduct research.

4. *To strengthen MHEC's infrastructure*

- 4.1 Leverage the influence and talents of commissioners more effectively.
- 4.2 Create an environment of continuous improvement and innovation.
- 4.3 Use technology effectively to support services and communication.
- 4.4 Develop/sustain a culture that supports a highly effective and motivated staff team.
- 4.5 Recruit affiliate members (states, provinces).
- 4.6 Recruit associates (educational organizations).
- 4.7 Use advisory committees more effectively to guide and evaluate programs.

We will have succeeded when....

- Every commissioner uses his/her capabilities to promote MHEC in his/her state; MHEC staff will provide resources and support.
- The strategic plan is reviewed quarterly by the staff and at every commission meeting.
- Staff objectives align with strategic plan objectives.
- Essential internal processes have been mapped and improved as necessary.
- Professional development plans are in place for staff.
- Technology has been evaluated and upgraded as necessary.
- An affiliate member (Pennsylvania, Manitoba, or Saskatchewan) is added to the Compact.
- At least three MHEC associates (e.g., The College Board, ACT, the Federal Reserve) are added.
- Advisory committee responsibilities are reviewed and clarified.