



**MIDWESTERN  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
COMPACT**

# Strategic Plan

2017-2021

## OVERVIEW

The opening statement in the statute enacted into law in the **TWELVE MEMBER STATES** of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (**MHEC**) provides the defining mission of the organization:



*The purpose of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact shall be 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 this Compact.*



MHEC's success over the **PAST 25 YEARS** has been defined by its ability to build successful programs providing a broad range of outcomes that support this mission.

As MHEC launches into its **NEXT 25 YEARS**, the region is dealing with a multitude of challenges that will drive it to deliver new innovative programs and services and require it to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of current programs. **THIS STRATEGIC PLAN IS BASED ON THAT REALITY.**

After listening to stakeholders and carefully analyzing capacities, it became clear the Strategic Plan needs to focus on three things.

### — 1 —

Define the organization's outcomes; the products it delivers, and the outcomes to measure its success

### — 2 —

Outline the common themes raised by Commissioners, employees, committee members, and other stakeholders as they examined the work the Compact should be engaged in during the next five years

### — 3 —

Provide an overview of the process to filter and shape ideas into actionable efforts providing benefit to the region and states served by the Compact

# OUTCOMES

MHEC has traditionally focused its narrative on the programs and services offered to the member states. As MHEC embarks on the next phase of development it will refocus the conversation around the **OUTCOMES** that arise from its programs and services. This will help **BUILD CONNECTIONS** across and within the organization, as well as **CREATE COMMON THREADS** that tie MHEC's work together.

## Professional Development

Disseminate knowledge and expertise about practical solutions

## Best Practices

Showcase successful efforts in the member states and provide a forum to share successes

## Organizational Revenue

Reinvest in MHEC programs and services and maintain an affordable state commitment

## Market Influence

Impact the market to better meet the unique needs of higher education

## Peer Connectivity

Network and solve problems together

## Initiative Metrics

Document the breadth and depth of MHEC's constituent reach



## Policy Guidance

Advance forward-looking ideas in a non-partisan, collaborative environment

## Solution Accessibility

Provide access to options not readily available to all constituents

## Efficiencies

Do more with less, address costs that cannot be measured in hard dollars

## Procurement Process

Ensure compliance and quality control through a trusted procurement process

## Savings

Save entities in the member states millions of dollars, opening doors for broader conversations

# THEMES

MHEC will focus its efforts in the next five years around these four key themes. The Commission will evaluate these themes on an annual basis to **ENSURE CONTINUED RELEVANCY** to the region.

## SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS – CHANGING COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY

Increasing racial, ethnic, and economic diversity  
Lack of population growth resulting in excess capacity  
Persistent achievement gap for socioeconomically challenged students  
Amplified need to serve students with some college but no credential

1

## EVOLVING MODES OF PACKAGING AND DELIVERING EDUCATION

Challenge to deliver better outcomes through technology  
Increased focus on competencies  
Demand for flexibility in higher education from early college to post-graduate studies – credit transfer, degree options, stackable credentials, and unbundling learning  
Diversification of credentials – licensures, badges, certificates, and certifications

2

## DECLINING SHARE OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Students paying a larger share of the cost of education resulting in greater student debt  
Increased expectations for return on investment and postsecondary education as practical career preparation to address workforce goals  
Heightened discussion about the value of liberal arts education

3

## DESIRE FOR COLLABORATION BEYOND THE INSTITUTION

Push for higher education to build capacity to better collaborate with other institutions, K12, accreditors, Federal government, legislatures, and employers  
Drive to leverage increasingly complex data and link longitudinal data systems together

4



# PROCESS

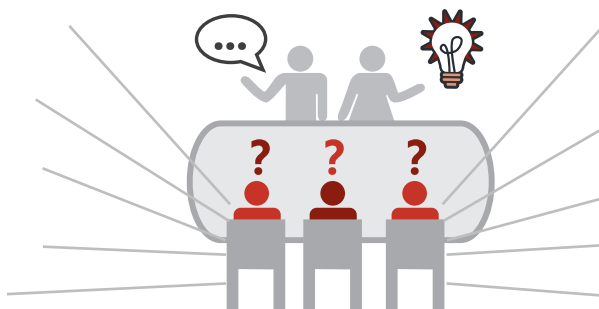
MHEC relies on the **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** provided by its Commissioners, committee members, staff, and other stakeholders to generate ideas that **RESULT IN ACTION**. In order to best use MHEC's resources, acting on those opportunities with the greatest potential to **BRING VALUE TO THE MEMBER STATES**, MHEC will develop a transparent process for evaluating each idea while setting up a process to continuously evaluate existing work.



## MHEC'S THEMES

Ideas generated will be **CONNECTED** to one or more of the aforementioned themes articulated by MHEC's constituency. Those who generate the ideas will be engaged with key stakeholders and MHEC staff to define the problem or opportunity and engage in data collection through a **SERIES OF QUESTIONS** that may include:

- How can MHEC deliver value linked to the articulated outcomes?
- How does the initiative benefit the region and member states?
- What type of activity would best suit the task?
- What is the scope of the effort?
- Who needs to be involved?



- What resources and expertise are required and does this align with MHEC's existing capacities?
- Are others actively working to address the issue?
- What does success look like?
- Is timing a concern?
- What happens if we don't act?

Based on the information gathered, a **BUSINESS CASE OR PROJECT CHARTER** will be developed. Depending on the nature of the opportunity, stakeholders will determine whether the idea should **MOVE FORWARD** as a project or initiative, **CONTINUE IN THE RESEARCH** phase, or be **SET ASIDE**.



—OR—



—OR—



## THE FINAL, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT STEP,

is the evaluation of the project or initiative, which will include these queries:



Were the objectives met?



Has the environment or opportunity changed?



Did this help the stakeholders it set out to assist?



Are themes identified within the Strategic Plan still being addressed?

**CONCLUSION:** MHEC is an organization created to be responsive to the needs of Midwestern higher education. In launching this Strategic Plan, MHEC recognizes it will be called upon to serve a higher education community that is rapidly changing. The approach outlined in this Strategic Plan recognizes this. The plan creates a process enabling MHEC to be proactive and innovative while grounding it to common themes and challenges for the region.