DRAFT IMPERATIVES

The proposed imperatives and summary observations below are offered for consideration and further input by the project team.
Potential topics may need additions, deletions, or rearrangement once the list of imperatives is finalized.

#	Draft Imperative	Draft Summary Observation	Potential Topics (derived from gathered input, project team dialogue, etc.)
1	Close the Opportunity Gap	A substantial opportunity gap exists for students of color and other historically underserved groups that inhibits their educational access, achievement, persistence, and completion. Barriers to educational attainment further intensify existing socio-economic inequities. ARC is already moving in a direction to close the opportunity gap through its commitment to social justice and equity as well as actions supporting the strategic goals of "Students First" and "Clear and Effective Paths".	▪ Guided Pathways reforms ▪ Culturally relevant instruction and provision of services ▪ Services, supports, and materials that enable participation in education (e.g., open educational resources) ▪ Digital divide and access to technology
2	Prepare Students for the Future of Work	Rapid technological advances are transforming the world of work. It is likely that many cognitive, service, and manual tasks (rather than entire jobs) will be automated in the future as artificial intelligence and advanced robotics become ubiquitous. The linear trajectory of education as preparation for a single career is no longer the norm. The self-employed workforce is growing as individuals elect, by choice or necessity, to engage in independent short-term gigs. The age range of the workforce is expanding and there is an increased demand for upskilling, reskilling, and learning across a lifetime.	▪ Upskilling and reskilling as jobs change due to automation ▪ Mindsets for workers in an automated society (e.g., creativity, adaptability) ▪ Knowledge and abilities to enable entrepreneurial or independent work (freelance, contract, temporary) ▪ Continuous learning across as a means to remain employable ▪ Digital fluency (basic technology skills) ▪ Role of the community college in mitigating the expected inequities of worker displacement

3	Extend the Liberal Education	A liberal education is the basis of an educated citizenry. Exposure to broad knowledge develops essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and social responsibility that translate across all aspects of work and life. In a rapidly changing environment, a liberal education also offers particular value as it provides a frame for considering challenging ideas and conflicting information. While it is undeniable that these skills are vitally important, it may be necessary to package or deliver liberal education in different ways to influence individuals who are electing to pursue short-term learning or skill building instead of a full college degree.
		
		Historically, there has been a clear divide between career education (vocational) and liberal education (academic/transfer) structures. The time is ideal to disrupt this dichotomy by enhancing curricular integration and faculty interaction.
			▪ Importance of maintaining the liberal education
			▪ Essential skills that are transferable as students change jobs or life roles; foundational skills for employment rather than a specific job
			▪ Information literacy - liberal education as context for sifting through voluminous messages in an information society; discerning fact and fiction; media and other influences
			▪ Building resilience – capacity to wrestle with ambiguity, complexity, and disturbing concepts (e.g., fear of technological changes, societal tensions, shifts in power and privilege)
			▪ Creative ways to embed liberal education
			   - alternatives to General Education requirements
			   - exposure to new experiences
			   - infusing historical/cultural contexts across disciplines
			   - learning community use of writing/math + content course
			▪ Bridging the divide between career education and liberal education
			   - aspects of German apprenticeship model
			   - faculty collaboration
			   - ensuring that the economically disadvantaged and historically underserved populations are encouraged to pursue transfer pathways as well as career education

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4	Tailor Experiences to the Individual (Student-Centric)	Students enter college with a variety of life experiences, challenges, aptitudes, skill sets, and goals. The working learner or re-entry student may have very different priorities from the incoming freshman who is a digital native or the former foster youth who is the first generation to attend college. Standardized (one-size-fits-all) experiences fail to meet the needs of today's learners. Students expect educational institutions to provide flexible learning options and personalized digital experiences that are similar to those received through consumer technologies. Traditional educational models structured primarily around typical office hours and weekday courses are institution-centric by design.	▪ Personalization
			  - tailored based on analytics and a holistic view of the student
			  - student engagement mechanisms
			  - relevant communication
			▪ Convenience
			  - learning anytime, anywhere, any device
			  - ease of access
			  - student-centric processes and systems
			▪ Flexibility
			  - multiple entry and exit points (e.g., monthly start dates)
			  - fast-track options
			  - alternate scheduling
			▪ Alternate credentials
			  - prior learning assessment
			  - badges and digital credentials
			  - recognizing continual learning
			▪ Accessibility

5	Enable Employers with Skilled Labor	Regional and local employers report a lack of skilled employment candidates and are also seeking expanded development opportunities for incumbent workers. However, existing college practices and curriculum processes lack the agility to proactively feed the labor pipeline and respond to immediate training needs. Some major employers are investing heavily to build their own internal training programs.
		
		Opportunities exist to strengthen connections in order to become the preferred training provider for various agencies and employers, but only if ARC closes the gap between what employers need and how colleges tend to operate.
			▪ Minimizing institutional barriers
			  - curriculum and program development processes
			  - semester-length classes
			▪ Employer-focused practices
			  - working-learning models
			  - reskilling of workers on site
			  - customized and alternate training models
			  - skill certification
			  - facilitating job placement/talent acquisition
			  - pipeline for public agencies (preparing students to navigate state hiring practices)
			▪ Strengthening connections to business and expanding partnerships
			  - employer influence on program and curricular design
			  - institution-wide interaction with employers and organizations (e.g., chamber of commerce)
			  - interaction with industry professionals (guest speaking, panel discussions, demonstrations, etc.)

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6	Explore New Frontiers in Learning	The future of learning is expected to be substantially different from the traditional classroom model based on seat time. There is a growing demand for efficient, contextualized, and experiential learning.
		
		Technological innovations offer the prospect to expand the learning environment by pioneering new and emerging tools. Immersive experiences and interactive methods can assist students to quickly grasp and apply knowledge. Simultaneously, the college must contend with the ideal balance between human interaction and absolute reliance on technology.
		
		Reimagining the classroom may be beneficial to provide flexible space for interaction, technology integration, and active learning.
			▪ Future of learning
			  - artificial intelligence and machine learning
			  - online education
			  - blending of physical and virtual worlds (i.e., virtual reality)
			  - learning science
			  - competency-based education
			  - experiential learning (e.g., design hub model)
			  - modular, just-in-time instruction
			  - integration of theory and practice (e.g., project-based)
			  - interdisciplinary learning (e.g., concept mapping across disciplines)
			▪ Classroom design for the future (brick and mortar as well as virtual classrooms)

7	Position ARC as a Viable Alternative	Traditional higher education once held a monopoly on knowledge transfer and credentials. This monopoly has eroded as information is now available at the click of a button; for-profit and online institutions pitch quick paths to a high-paying career; and various skill certifications have emerged as a substitute for transcripts and degrees.
		
		Students are seeking accelerated models of education paired with flexibility so that learning opportunities fit into their life, rather than trying to arrange life around a semester-based college schedule. With a median student age of 25 years[1], ARC serves an older population than the other colleges in the district. Many of these individuals are working learners and non-traditional students who are juggling a variety of life circumstances that compete for their time.
			▪ Design for the working learner
			  - minimize the constraints of traditional semesters (e.g., primarily 8-week schedules)
			  - multiple points of entry (on-ramps and off-ramps)
			  - fast-track pathways
			  - replication of Natomas Accelerated College Education (ACE) program at other venues
			  - flexible scheduling/self-paced
			  - support services that are accessible to working learners (e.g., extended hours; online; self-service)
			  - flexible scheduling/self-paced
			▪ Competing effectively
			  - recognizing the competition and why students consider them (e.g., University of Phoenix, Coursera, etc.)
			  - offering high-quality, low-cost alternatives

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[1] Fall 2018 Student Profile (October 2018). Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research.

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8	Thrive in an Age of Disruption	The scale of disruption in higher education is unprecedented. The pace of change continues to accelerate. Technological advancements, system reform, and shifting demographics have significant implications for how the college operates and provides services. Disruptive technology can either become a crisis to which the college eventually reacts or be a catalyst for proactive, progressive transformation.
		
		To not only survive, but thrive, in this environment requires agility and an entrepreneurial culture that is eager to turn possibility into reality. As college technology and processes evolve, employees will need to be equipped to effectively work alongside modern technologies, experiment with new methodologies, and cultivate an innovative mindset.
			▪ Agile organizations (how to be nimble)
			  - innovative, entrepreneurial culture (ARC Strategic Goal #4)
			  - idea management (mechanisms to ensure promising ideas are funded)
			  - trend monitoring/prediction (e.g., Design Hub suggestion)
			▪ Investing in employee training and development
			  - equipped to innovate instruction and student support
			  - equity focus (supporting Institutional Equity Plan)
			  - technology proficiency
			  - reskilling of employees whose jobs are being automated or whose programs are declining
			▪ Change leadership
			  - how to create continuity of leadership or perhaps distributed leadership to realize the vision (challenge of dean turnover)
			  - resistance to change/lethargy to change at the district level
			▪ Celebrating achievement and failure
			  - employee recognition
			  - institutional milestones (moving the needle)
			  - risks taken, lessons learned

9	Fulfill the Social Responsibility	The college serves as both a safety net and community resource for individuals facing homelessness, food insecurity, and other insufficiencies that are a growing societal concern. Providing for immediate student needs is crucial, but more holistic approaches are necessary to overcome underlying causes and move households from dependency to self-sufficiency.	▪ The community college as a vehicle of social welfare ▪ Bundled services, education, and resources that support self-sufficiency ▪ Homelessness, food insecurity, and related topics such as literacy, English language acquisition, financial coaching, job placement, and public benefits ▪ Community access and partnerships ▪ ARC's role in facilitating social and economic mobility

10	Growth in Reach and Access	With the exception of North Natomas and North Highlands, ARC's service area is not expected to experience significant population growth through 2035[2]. Considering these projections, as well as ARC's commitment to social justice and equity, there is an opportunity to better serve the community by expanding access and reach to penetrate areas and populations that are not currently well served.	▪ Increasing Access
			  - dual enrollment/accelerating the college experience
			  - online education
			  - relocatable instruction (e.g., mobile sim lab)
			▪ Building Awareness
			  - differentiation (competitive advantage via flagship programs, exemplary services, etc. that make ARC stand out)
			  - marketing and outreach

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[2] The 2016 External Environmental Scan of the Greater Sacramento Area (April 2016). Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research.

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11	Strive for Operational Effectiveness	Institutional agility is contingent upon strategic transformation of how the college and district operates at the most basic level. Many institutional processes and systems are inefficient by design and have not kept pace with the external environment. The clunkiness of existing practice is a barrier to institutional agility and progress. In many cases, policies and labor-intensive procedures result in frustration and sluggishness. Moreover, antiquated practices regularly act as a major hurdle for marginalized populations that can diminish the likelihood of successful outcomes for both students and employees.
		
		Systematic efforts are needed to identify the barriers, explore options for improvement, collaboratively propose changes, and rapidly create greater operational effectiveness.
			▪ Expectations of modern students and employees
			  - student perception that Los Rios is not "tech forward"
			  - ARC Strategic Goal #4 calls for "Proactive, effective, and efficient operational systems"
			▪ Progressive Change
			  - change leadership - "Dean of Barrier Destruction"
			  - business process redesign
			  - simplified error resolution
			  - make it easy to get help
			  - comparable level of service for remote (virtual) students and employees
			  - digital records that travel with the student (Blockchain)
			  - efficiency - speed up access to budgets, information, services
			▪ Districtwide advocacy

12	Adapt the Physical Campus	External factors, such as the growth of online education, are signaling that the role of the physical campus may change in the future and that space is likely to be used in different ways. College campuses are being intentionally developed as gathering spaces for collaboration, community-building, and experiential learning. As self-service options grow, students are less likely to approach campus to transact business and seek information, but facilities remain an access point for services (e.g., health services), discipline-specific equipment, and cutting-edge technology. The physical space of a college campus also can enhance its community as a cultural destination. It is expected that ARC's physical campus will become increasingly technology-enabled with ability to support virtual interactions both inside and outside the classroom. The changing role of the physical campus will have substantial implications for infrastructure, energy consumption, accessibility, and sustainability.	▪ Role of the campus in the future (what should it be?) ▪ Cultural destination ▪ Spaces to congregate and build community ▪ Mobility/transit across campus ▪ Enabling virtual interaction in the physical classroom ▪ Environmental conscientiousness; green technology ▪ Green space for teaching and learning ▪ Location to access technology and lab equipment (e.g., virtual reality headsets) ▪ Energy needs
13	Cultivate Financial Sustainability	In order to respond to the previously stated imperatives, the college must have considerable financial resources to invest in its programs, services, delivery methods, campus, and technologies. Historically, community colleges have been subject to major fluctuations in state funding based on enrollment and the California economy. The introduction of a new performance-based funding formula adds another layer of complexity. Community colleges also anticipate a variety of rising costs. An intentional approach will be needed to ensure the college has adequate resources to fund its future endeavors.	▪ Opportunities in the new funding formula ▪ Diversifying revenue streams ▪ Grants and blended funding partnerships ▪ Contract education or other profit centers ▪ Reducing costs through more efficient business practices

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14	Evolve the Ecosystem: Advocacy, Collaboration, and Coordination	Within higher education, and particularly within California, there is an increasing emphasis on accountability and educational reform. District boundaries are also becoming more transparent as the California Online Community College (Calbright) recently opened with boundaries that encompass the entire state. Community college students are also now able to easily enroll in multiple districts simultaneously via the California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative (CVC-OEI) Exchange. ARC also exists within a multi-college district in which districtwide initiatives and discussions often have local implications. New ways of advocating, coordinating, and collaborating will be necessary in order for ARC to prosper and effectively serve its mission.	- Interdependence and interaction of the Los Rios Community College District within the California Community Colleges system - Interdependence and interaction of American River College within the Los Rios Community College District - Opportunities for American River College to consider within the California Community Colleges system and the global higher education landscape - Different models of collaboration - Data sharing across the district and with K-12 partners