

Quick Reference Guide: LEADERSHIP

Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Framework

For: President, Board of Trustees, VPs, Senior Administrators

Your Primary Role: STRATEGIC THINKING

You are responsible for:

- Setting institutional direction and vision
 - Making high-stakes, long-term decisions
 - Allocating major resources
 - Ensuring alignment across all organizational levels
 - Communicating the “why” behind institutional priorities
-

Key Questions You Should Ask

Strategic Level (Your Primary Focus)

✓ **WHERE** is RCC going?

- What is our 5-year vision?
- How do we position RCC competitively?
- What partnerships will transform outcomes?
- What is our unique value proposition?

Tactical Level (Ensure Your Team Answers)

✓ HOW will we get there?

- Do our VPs and Deans have clear implementation plans?
- Are resources aligned with strategic priorities?
- Are we coordinating across departments effectively?

Operational Level (Monitor for Quality)

✓ WHAT is happening daily?

- Are faculty and staff executing with excellence?
 - Do frontline employees understand how their work connects to strategy?
 - Are we measuring operational performance effectively?
-

Your Strategic Responsibilities at RCC

1. Champion the Roxbury 2030 Strategic Plan

- Review progress quarterly with leadership team
- Communicate strategic priorities at every all-staff meeting
- Ensure Board understands and supports the plan
- Celebrate milestones publicly

2. Leverage the 5Ps Framework

Every major decision should align with at least one of the 5Ps:

- **Purpose:** Does this advance our economic mobility mission?
- **People:** Does this serve our diverse student population?
- **Place:** Does this improve our campus environment?
- **Programs:** Does this strengthen our academic offerings?
- **Partnerships:** Does this expand our external relationships?

3. Prioritize A2M Expansion

The Associate to Master's model is RCC's strategic differentiator:

- **Free RCC tuition + A2M scholarships = debt-free pathways**
- Expand beyond Healthcare into IT, Business, Education
- Position RCC as the national leader in debt-free graduate education
- Measure success by graduate earnings, not just completion rates

4. Maximize PBI Designation Benefits

RCC's PBI status provides \$2-5M annually in federal funding:

- Ensure Institutional Advancement pursues all available grants
 - Invest PBI funds strategically (not just operationally)
 - Report PBI impact to Board and community stakeholders
-

Common Leadership Pitfalls to Avoid

✗ Strategic Drift: Having a vision but no tactical plans to achieve it

Solution: Require every strategic goal to have corresponding tactical initiatives with clear owners and timelines.

✗ Micromanaging Tactics: Getting too involved in program-level decisions

Solution: Empower VPs and Deans to make tactical decisions; hold them accountable for results, not methods.

✗ Ignoring Operational Realities: Making strategic decisions without understanding implementation challenges

Solution: Create feedback loops so frontline employees can surface operational barriers.

✗ Siloed Decision-Making: Allowing departments to pursue competing priorities

Solution: Use the 5Ps Framework to ensure all initiatives align with institutional strategy.

✗ Short-Term Thinking: Reacting to crises instead of executing long-term plans
Solution: Distinguish between urgent issues (delegate) and strategic priorities (lead personally).

Your Communication Responsibilities

What to Communicate (and How Often)

Quarterly:

- Progress toward Roxbury 2030 goals
- Strategic priorities for the upcoming quarter
- Major decisions and their rationale

Annually:

- State of the College address
- Strategic plan updates
- Budget priorities and resource allocation

Ongoing:

- Celebrate successes that demonstrate strategic progress
- Reinforce the “why” behind institutional priorities
- Model strategic thinking in all public communications

Key Messages to Reinforce

1. **“RCC offers debt-free pathways to high-wage careers.”**
(Emphasizes free tuition + A2M scholarships)
2. **“We are building a national model for economic mobility.”**
(Positions RCC as a leader, not a follower)
3. **“Every employee contributes to student success.”**
(Connects operational work to strategic mission)

4. “The 5Ps guide every decision we make.”

(Reinforces the strategic framework)

Decision-Making Framework for Leaders

When evaluating a new initiative, ask:

1. **Strategic Alignment:** Does this advance Roxbury 2030 goals?
2. **Resource Impact:** What is the total cost (money, time, attention)?
3. **Opportunity Cost:** What are we NOT doing if we pursue this?
4. **Sustainability:** Can we maintain this long-term, or is it a one-time effort?
5. **Measurement:** How will we know if this succeeds?

Red Flags (When to Say No)

- Initiative has no clear owner or accountability
 - Conflicts with existing strategic priorities
 - Requires resources we don't have
 - Duplicates work already happening elsewhere
 - Lacks measurable outcomes
-

Metrics You Should Monitor

Strategic KPIs (Review Quarterly)

- Graduate earnings 5 years post-completion
- Transfer rates to 4-year institutions
- A2M pathway enrollment and completion
- PBI federal funding secured
- National rankings and media coverage

Tactical KPIs (Review Monthly)

- Number of A2M pathways operational
- Students enrolled in transfer programs
- Partnership agreements signed
- Faculty professional development participation

Operational KPIs (Review as Needed)

- Course completion rates
 - Student satisfaction scores
 - Advising appointment attendance
 - Financial aid processing time
-

Your Role in the Communication Plan

Phase 1: Leadership Alignment (Weeks 1-4)

Your Actions:

- Participate in executive retreat on strategic framework
- Commit to modeling strategic thinking publicly
- Ensure all VPs understand their tactical responsibilities
- Approve communication plan for rollout

Phase 2: Middle Management Training (Weeks 5-8)

Your Actions:

- Open department-level workshops with strategic context
- Reinforce the importance of tactical planning
- Provide resources for implementation

Phase 3: All-Staff Engagement (Weeks 9-12)

Your Actions:

- Lead town hall explaining the framework
 - Share examples of how strategic, tactical, and operational levels integrate
 - Invite questions and feedback
-

Immediate Action Checklist

- Review Roxbury 2030 Strategic Plan** and identify 3 priorities for this quarter
 - Meet with each VP** to ensure they have tactical plans aligned with strategic goals
 - Schedule quarterly strategic review** with leadership team
 - Identify one strategic decision** currently stalled and create a path forward
 - Communicate strategic priorities** at the next all-staff meeting
 - Review PBI grant applications** and ensure alignment with strategic goals
 - Visit one A2M partner institution** to strengthen the relationship
 - Ask 5 frontline employees:** “How does your work support RCC’s strategic goals?”
-

Resources

Strategic Plan: Roxbury 2030 (available from Institutional Effectiveness)

Interactive Webpage: RCC Strategic Alignment Portal

Full Presentation: Available with speaker notes

Questions: Submit via online feedback form

Remember

Your job is not to do the work—it’s to ensure the right work gets done.

- **Think strategically:** Focus on WHERE RCC is going
- **Empower tactically:** Let your team figure out HOW
- **Monitor operationally:** Ensure WHAT is happening aligns with strategy

- **Communicate constantly:** Everyone should understand the “why”

The most important question you can ask:

“How does this decision advance RCC’s mission to transform student lives and strengthen the Roxbury community?”

Prepared by Manus AI for Roxbury Community College

Last Updated: February 2026