STUDENTS FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT As Essex County College celebrates its 50th year of service, our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, titled *STUDENTS FIRST*, honors the legacy of our past accomplishments and looks ambitiously to the future. Nearly a year and half ago, we embarked on a journey to evaluate the state of the College and chart a sustainable course for the next five years. This was an extensive and inclusive process that relied heavily on stakeholder input and campus-wide participation. Critical conversations centering on our past accomplishments, current and projected data trends, and multiple internal and external environmental scans laid the groundwork for navigating a path towards dynamic new growth and opportunities. The charge given to those leading the process was to keep one principle in mind: that the success of our students is our first priority and the driving force behind everything that we do.

STUDENTS FIRST is a vision and a blueprint for where the College wants to go over the next five years and defines the strategies that we will employ to get there. The Plan's implementation process includes a clear framework for the systematic engagement and accountability of the entire Essex County College community, quantifiable performance indicators for measuring our progress, and an integration of our planning and budgeting processes to ensure an effective allocation of resources.

The Plan's goals and objectives encompass all aspects of teaching, learning, and student support for our multiple missions – award completion, transfer, and workforce development. Additionally, the Plan acknowledges the full range of challenges that students are faced with, including their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and takes a holistic approach towards addressing those needs. *STUDENTS FIRST* not only embodies our commitment to the success of our students, it does so in a conscious and deliberate manner that espouses our institutional values of diversity, access, inclusion, and service to the community.

As we embark upon this new chapter in our history, the College looks beyond the current reality of risk and uncertainty, and envisions a bright future for both our students and our institution that is ripe with opportunities. Essex County College is a vibrant community that has always been a wonderful place to learn, teach, and work. Implementation of this plan will allow us to build on our successes and share our accomplishments with the world.

Dr. Anthony E. Munroe President



STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

MISSION

Essex County College is an open access community college that serves the diverse needs of students through comprehensive educational programs, training and continuing education. Essex County College is dedicated to academic excellence and the success of its students.

VISION

A Beacon for Education and Knowledge, Essex County College attracts people who seek a better life through education. We transform lives, broaden learning and empower students to achieve their full potential. Our College community and graduates are change agents and leaders who contribute to the health, vitality and advancement of society.

VALUES

Essex County College affirms the following principles, values and beliefs:

Teaching and Learning: We affirm teaching and learning as our primary purpose. The College seeks to instill in students general and specialized knowledge, the ability to think critically, and a commitment to civic responsibility. We value academic freedom and support the open exchange of ideas and experiences.

Excellence and Accountability: We believe in creating a learning environment that fosters high expectations for achievement. The College is committed to rigorous academic standards, faculty excellence, and responsive support services that enable students to reach their full academic, professional and personal potential. We provide excellent programs that utilize technology, demonstrate innovation, and undergo evaluation to ensure consistent and outstanding performance.

Community and Engagement: We support programs that enhance the economic and social development of Essex County. We value our role as a vital community resource and are dedicated to forging effective partnerships with our many constituencies.



Diversity and Access: We embrace the rich diversity of our student population and our employees. We recognize the historical, intellectual, and artistic contributions of all cultures, and promote an atmosphere in which critical examination of perspectives is accepted and encouraged. We believe all people should have access to affordable, quality higher education that will prepare them to succeed in a dynamic world.

Legacy and Transformation: We honor our history and valued traditions of Essex County College, the City of Newark and the County of Essex. We also welcome the transformative power of education to change lives. Building upon our past achievements, we eagerly embrace the future by pursuing innovations in teaching, administration, and student services.



GOALI

USE STUDENT SUCCESS AS A GUIDE FOR ALL OF OUR ACTIONS

The success of Essex County College students - in the classroom, in the workplace, and in life - is our highest priority. Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and all other areas of the College will work collaboratively to ensure that our students are academically, culturally, professionally, and socially well-prepared to succeed.



- A. Increase student access, persistence, and completion, through the implementation of Guided Pathways and other initiatives to alleviate barriers to student success
- B. Enhance learning support systems and wraparound services that will enable each student to achieve their full potential
- C. Provide professional development for faculty and staff so they may further enrich the student experience
- D. Expand and better align extra-curricular and co-curricular activities with academic programs
- E. Increase collaboration with secondary schools to improve college and career readiness of incoming students
- F. Expand articulation agreements with local, national, and international fouryear colleges to increase student transfer opportunities
- G. Ensure that capital planning and technological development initiatives are designed to best serve our students

GOAL II

FOSTER INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND EVIDENCE-BASED PLANNING

Essex County College is dedicated to developing systematic and sustainable planning and assessment processes to best position our students, institution, and community for the twenty-first century. Faced with an evolving global economy and rapidly changing labor markets, the College must be adaptive, innovative, and agile in order to remain competitive and effective. We will meet our community's educational and cultural needs by making a firm commitment to implement data driven decision-making.

- A. Provide all academic units with effective methodologies for the assessment of student learning along with the leadership, guidance, and resources to ensure sustainable quality improvement processes
- B. Systematically evaluate all academic programs on a multi-year program review cycle to ensure that programs are appropriately resourced and aligned with the rapidly evolving job market of the twenty-first century
- C. Implement a comprehensive annual cycle of institutional assessments in order to better understand our students' needs, concerns, and obstacles to success
- D. Implement an annual assessment cycle for administrative and student support units that is aligned with the institutional mission and the College strategic plan
- E. Establish data governance policies and practices that lead to enhanced data integrity which will better position the institution for data driven decision-making





GOAL III

PROMOTE INNOVATIVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Essex County College students benefit from an expansive network of partnerships with internal and external stakeholders. These partnerships provide internships, apprenticeships, clinical experiences, and other opportunities to prepare students for the workforce needs of a global economy. Partnerships also provide opportunities to collaborate on grant proposals, fundraising, and other initiatives that leverage the resources of local businesses and the community.

- A. Expand industry partnerships and collaborations to create opportunities for experiential learning, skill building, and employment that improve student economic mobility
- B. Refine and expand our capacity to deliver workforce development training, including industry certifications and stackable credentials that meet the needs of the public and private sectors
- C. Expand partnerships and fundraising opportunities to enhance institutional and student resources



GOAL IV

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND OUR WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAM OFFERINGS

For 50 years, Essex County College students and alumni have achieved a high level of academic and professional success and have earned distinction in athletics, the arts, and public service. The College continues to be a resource to the community – local, national, and beyond. Raising awareness of our achievements and contributions will allow the College to grow, thrive, and better meet the needs of our community.

- A. Build and promote a brand centered around the College's commitment to academic excellence, diversity, and career development
- B. Utilize the success stories of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters in marketing and advertising initiatives
- C. Grow the use of social media and other emerging media technologies to promote awareness of the College's online and on-campus offerings, programming, and accomplishments



GOAL V

PROMOTE A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUS CULTURE

As an institution with a rich legacy of diversity, Essex County College strives to maintain a culture where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and respected. For the College to achieve its Mission, Vision, and Values, it must intentionally nurture inclusiveness, embrace diversity, and welcome differing perspectives. This approach allows the institution to provide a safe, supportive learning environment for all students that values the rich mosaic of the community it serves.

- A. Provide a welcoming, safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and the community
- B. Foster a truly inclusive learning experience for all students which embraces freedom of expression and multiple points of view
- C. Provide a holistic approach to support services where physical, emotional, and mental well-being are emphasized in order for students to feel safe, valued, and supported





KEY PERFORMANCE

While the goals and objectives of *STUDENTS FIRST* outline what Essex County College will be working to achieve over the next five years, the 16 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on the following pages will help us measure the effectiveness of our strategic planning efforts.

These KPIs not only serve as overarching measures of our institution's health, but will also be used to quantify the degree to which our planning efforts make an impact. The success of *STUDENTS FIRST* will be defined as improvement in these metrics over the course

of the five-year plan. Since KPIs are broad in nature and touch on multiple facets of the institution's operations, they span multiple goals and objectives allowing for a broad overall evaluation of institutional success.

Listed on the following pages are the 16 KPIs of *STUDENTS FIRST* along with descriptions and baseline data. While some baselines will already be known (e.g. FTE enrollment), others will have to be established in our first year of implementation (e.g. Scorecards).





КРІ	Description	Baseline
KPI #1 Retention Rate	Retention metrics including one year FTFTDS cohort retention rate, overall retention rate, and overall attrition rate.	Fall 2017 Cohort: 51.6% Fall 2017-Fall 2018 overall: Retention rate: 51.5% Attrition rate: 48.5%
KPI #2 Graduation Rate	Percent of the FTFTDS cohort who graduate within 3 years	Fall 2015 Cohort: 12.3%
KPI #3 Student Support Score	Index score based on a fixed question set from the annual Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey	To be determined in Fall 2019
KPI #4 Student Satisfaction Score	Index score based on a fixed question set from the annual Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey	To be determined in Fall 2019
KPI #5 Campus Climate Score	Index score based on a fixed question set on the annual Campus Climate Survey.	To be determined in Fall 2019
KPI #6 Student Engagement Score	Index score based on a fixed question set from the annual Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey	To be determined in Fall 2019
KPI #7 FTE Enrollment	12-Month FTE Enrollment and percent change from the prior year	AY 17-18: 6,598 % Change: -9.1%
KPI #8 Penetration Rate	Percent of Essex County high school graduates who attend ECC the following fall	Fall 2018: 6.3%



КРІ	Description	Baseline
KPI #9 Enrollment Yield	Percent of completed fall applications that enroll	Fall 2018: 39.1%
KPI #10 Complete Applications	Number of complete fall applications and percent change from the prior fall	Fall 2018: 5,321 % Change: -8.9
KPI #11 Transfer-Out Rate	Percent of the fall first-time, full-time, first- year, degree-seeking cohort who transfer- out within 3 years	Fall 2015 Cohort: 13.20%
KPI #12 Academic Partnerships	Number of secondary and post-secondary articulation agreements	As of Fall 2018 Secondary: 16 Post-Secondary: 18
KPI #13 Annual Institutional Aid Awarded	Total annual institutional aid/scholarship dollars awarded, number of recipients, and average award amount	AY 16 Total: 749,000 Number: 269 Avg. Amt.: \$2,784
KPI #14 Total Grant Dollars	The total annual grant funding dollars, number of grants received, and average award amount	FY 18 Total: 7,193,868 Number: 34 Avg. Amt.: \$211,584
KPI #15 Marketing/Recruiting Score	Index score based on a fixed question set on the admissions application	To be determined in Fall 2019
KPI #16 Employer Reputation Score	Index score based on a fixed question set on the annual Employer Survey	To be determined in Fall 2019

IMPLEMENTATION OF *STUDENTS FIRST*

As with any plan, the success of *STUDENTS FIRST* is contingent upon the ability to implement it. The Strategic Planning Committee, which includes input from twentyfive members of our administration, faculty, staff, student body, and alumni, serves as the governing body charged with oversight of our planning process. *STUDENTS FIRST* will be implemented through systematic and sustained operational planning, with two annual deliverables: The Annual Operational Plan and the Annual Operational Report.

The Annual Operational Plan is built upon the College's strategic priorities for the upcoming year and the action-plans developed from the prior-year's results. Annual priorities are aligned with our strategic plan's goals and objectives and further refined into annual outcomes, with clearly defined measures and end-of-year targets. This process occurs at both the institutional and departmental level. The Strategic Planning Committee monitors the ongoing implementation of the Annual Operational Plan throughout the year.

The implementation strategy for *STUDENTS FIRST* moves the measurable outcomes and targets that fall under strategic objectives from the Plan to the annual operational planning phase. This deliberate shift helps to ensure that the annual planning process is up-to-date and aligned with evolving factors such as resources, initiatives, funding, organizational structure, and legislation. This approach will result in a process that is more responsive, relevant, and able to provide actionable results.

Results of our planning efforts are released in the Annual Operational Report and presented to the College community at our annual Strategic Planning Retreat. This summative, end-of-year report delivers the results of the Annual Operational Plan and includes a dashboard report of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The annual retreat allows the College community to reflect on the results of our planning, our institutional strengths, and the areas where we should concentrate our improvement efforts. These resultsbased conversations, centering around improvement, serve as the first step in the action-planning process. These ideas are passed along to the Strategic Planning Committee where they are refined, formalized, and developed into the Action Plan in the next year's Annual Operational Plan.

The strategic planning calendar has been developed in concert with the annual budgeting cycle so that cabinet officials can ensure their budget requests are aligned with strategic priorities and action-plans for the upcoming year. The annual planning calendar is also designed to inform the budget adjustment and reallocation process so resources can be strategically deployed with formally identified institutional priorities in mind. The integration of the strategic planning cycle and the annual budgeting calendar is detailed on the following page:





	Essex County College - Strategic Planning Calendar
June	 Strategic Planning Committee addresses institutional strategic priorities for the upcoming year by developing outcomes, measures, and targets linked to strategic plan objectives Action planning based on prior year results (committee level discussions)
July	 Strategic Planning Committee works with departments to develop strategic priorities for the upcoming year by developing outcomes, measures, and targets linked to strategic plan objectives Committee finalizes annual action plan
August	 The Strategic Planning Committee compiles strategic priorities for the upcoming year at both the institutional and departmental levels, and incorporates the annual action plan into the finalized Annual Operational Plan for the upcoming year Determination of new/modified resource allocation in conjunction with the Annual Operational Plan Finance begins to develop Board of School Estimate presentation (Due in February)
September	Begin Implementation of the Annual Operational Plan
Ongoing	 Implementation and monitoring of the Annual Operational Plan
February	 Administration requests draft budgets from departments, which must include rationale for new/additional expenditures Departments draft their budget requests utilizing results from the prior year operational planning report and must explicitly link requests to strategic plan goals
March	 Begin Compiling Results for the Annual Operational Report Collect mid-year action planning updates from responsible parties
April	 Review of draft budgets by: Division Chairs and Directors Area Deans, Executive Directors, and VPAA President and CFO Review includes an evaluation of alignment between requests and strategic plan goals Finalize the Annual Operational Report after the close of the Annual IPEDS Spring collection
Мау	 Annual Strategic Planning Retreat Review results of the Annual Operational Report Action-planning based on prior year results Board and Cabinet level discussion) Strategic Planning Committee makes annual appointments for non-administrative members to begin in September

APPENDICES

- A. Development of *STUDENTS FIRST* B. Charge to the Strategic Planning Committee C. Essex County College Leadership

APPENDIX A DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS FIRST

Phase I of the Essex County College strategic planning process kicked off in July 2017 with a Board of Trustees-Cabinet Strategic Planning Retreat. This meeting brought Trustees together with Cabinet Officers and senior administrators for dialogue about the state of the College and the need for a strategic plan that would move the College towards sustainable prosperity. In this day-long series of meetings, the College employed an Appreciative Inquiry approach, using a collaborative, strengths-based dialogue and an environmental scanning methodology to determine the institution's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results/Resources (SOAR). The event featured keynote speaker Dr. Christine Harrington, Executive Director of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC), Center for Student Success. Dr. Harrington discussed supporting student success through the use of Guided Pathways.

In November 2017, the College moved to Phase II of its strategic planning process with its second Board of Trustees-Cabinet Retreat. Trustees. Cabinet Officers and senior administrators joined with select knowledge leaders including Dr. A. Zachary Yamba, Essex County College President Emeritus, Dr. Edward J. Yaw, County College of Morris President Emeritus, and Lawrence A. Nespoli, President of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC). Discussions revolved around development of a plan that would move the College forward in its mission. The College again utilized the Appreciative Inquiry SOAR approach and gathered insights on the strategic directions the College should pursue.

In March 2018, the College further built upon the foundational work done in the first two phases and entered **Phase III**. This phase focused on ensuring that all members of the college community were able to participate in the planning process and that the voices of all constituencies were represented. Under the leadership of the President, a steering committee was created, and members conducted meetings with their respective areas to solicit input on the direction of the College. The President facilitated a series of critical strategic planning meetings with several constituent groups, including Academic Division Chairs and Governance Committee Chairs. In May, a student focus group was held to gather student input and the College held its Phase III Strategic Planning Retreat. Participants included the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board, Cabinet Officers, Associate Deans, Directors, Academic Division Chairs, Governance Council Chairs, and union leaders. Finally, in June 2018, a Strategic Planning Survey was sent to faculty, adjuncts, and 39 external stakeholders to gather input from the instructional side of the house and the business and donor community.

Phase IV, the final phase in the Plan's development, began in March 2019 with the reconvening of the Strategic Planning Committee. The focus of Phase IV was to incorporate the foundational work from the first three phases into a formally structured plan. It was seen as essential throughout this process to capture the richness of ideas that were developed in the earlier phases. Working groups led by members of the Strategic Planning Committee developed five strategic goals and 21 strategic objectives, directly derived from the five

topical themes that emerged in the first three phases. These working groups, the Committee at large, and a group of editors worked together to produce a final draft of the Plan which was named STUDENTS FIRST. In addition to the five strategic goals and 21 strategic objectives, the Committee established 16 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an implementation plan that includes a process for the creation of annual operational plans to be developed and monitored by the Committee. As part of this implementation plan, the Committee integrated the annual strategic planning calendar with the annual budgeting cycle to ensure that the process of allocating resources is aligned with the strategic initiatives of the College.

The Committee and working groups carefully ensured that the goals and objectives of STUDENTS FIRST were aligned with several key internal and external initiatives. Internal initiatives included the Academic Master Plan, Enrollment Management Plan, Institutional Advancement Plan, and Institutional Effectiveness Framework which are all currently being finalized. External initiatives that were intentionally embedded into STUDENTS FIRST include the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC): Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation's Future, the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges (NJCCC): Vision 2028, the plan from the New Jersey, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE): Where Opportunity Meets Innovation, and Guided Pathways, a model created through a collaboration of over a dozen partners including the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement (NCII) and the Community College Research Center (CCRC).

Throughout four phases of plan development, countless faculty, staff, administrators, students, and alumni contributed to the creation of this Plan. We would like to give recognition and thanks to all who participated in this process.



APPENDIX B CHARGE TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee. Your participation is not only critical to the strength of Essex County College; it is also very much appreciated. The planning process is our way of prioritizing the activities and resources that support our mission. The Strategic Planning Committee is charged to support and monitor the planning process in the following areas:

I. The Committee The Strategic Planning Committee is a standing committee established to develop and monitor the strategic planning process for Essex County College. The composition of the membership includes:

Dr. Anthony E. Munroe (Chair)

Dr. Leigh Bello-De Castro Mr. Alfred Bundy Mr. Ron Goldfarb Ms. Yvette Henry Mr. Julio Izquierdo Ms. Yvette Jefferies Dr. Keith Kirkland Dr. Jeffrey Lee Dr. Jinsoo Park Dr. June Persaud Mr. Sanjay Ramdath Mr. John Runfeldt (Vice-Chair) Dr. Jill Stein Dr. Elvira Vieira 7 Academic Division Representatives 2 Staff Representatives **1** Student Representative 1 Alumni Representative

Terms of service for administrative committee members are continuous for the life of the strategic plan.

Terms of service for non-administrative committee members will be rotating one year appointments.

II. Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process will include the following:

- Development and oversight of all appropriate planning documents (Vision Statement, Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, etc.)
- A five year cycle for implementation of the Plan
- An annual cycle of implementation and assessment (Annual Operational Plan)
- Institution-level and department-level components

III. Roles and Responsibilities

Committee members will be responsible for the following:

- Understanding the components of an institutional strategic plan and developing those that are necessary (Vision, Mission, Values Statement, Goals, KPIs, Implementation Plan, related appendices, etc.).
- Developing and supporting the goals, objectives, and KPIs of the institutional strategic plan.
- Oversight in the development and execution of all activities in the annual strategic planning calendar including its integration into the budgeting process.
- Oversight in the development and execution of the annual operational plan which identifies strategic planning priorities and targets for the year.
- Ensure accountability by monitoring progress of annual operational plans via mid-year and year-end reports.
- Engaging identified stakeholder groups in the action-planning process by providing feedback to those groups on a systematic basis.
- Actively participating in committee activities and discussions.

Seven members representing each of the seven academic divisions will serve on the committee each year. In the first year (2019) representation will consist of the seven division chairpersons. In years 2020-2024, the division chairs will use a self-nomination process annually to select their division's annual representative.

APPENDIX C ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Board of Trustees

Mr. Thomas C. McDermott, Chair Ms. Johanna Wright, Vice Chair Mrs. Jeweline Grimes, Secretary Reverend Dr. Lanel D. Guyton, Treasurer Dr. Marion Bolden Ms. Isabel Cruz Dr. Arnold C. Lewis Mr. Joseph Maceri Ms. Carmen T. Morales Ms. Beth Robinson Mr. Joseph Zarra



Dr. Anthony E. Munroe

President

Cabinet Members

Mr. Alfred Bundy Executive Director of Institutional Advancement

Ms. Yvette Henry Executive Director of Human Resources

Mr. Julio Izquierdo Vice President of Business Operations/Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Syrion Jack Deputy General Counsel/ Chief Compliance Officer

Ms. Yvette Jefferies Director of College Advancement and Foundation

Dr. Keith Kirkland Dean of Student Affairs

Dr. Jeffrey Lee Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

Dr. June Persaud Associate Dean of Program Development and Learning Resources

Mr. Sanjay Ramdath

Executive Director of Enrollment Management

Mr. John Runfeldt

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Assessment

Mr. Mohamed Seddiki Executive Dean/CIO of Administrative and Learning Technologies

Dr. Jill Stein Dean of STEM and Health Sciences

Ms. Joy Tolliver General Counsel

Dr. Elvira Vieira Dean of Community, Continuing Education and Workforce Development

Mr. Evens Wagnac Deputy Chief Financial Officer



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