



STUDENTS FIRST

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024 | VERSION 2.2

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2023



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	4
MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES	5
GOAL I	6
Re-establish financial stability to ensure a sustainable future for Essex County College	
GOAL II	8
Maximize the impact of our academic programs on the local community and labor market by increasing the number of students served	
GOAL III	10
Continue to innovate our academic and student support programs to improve student persistence and on-time completion	
GOAL IV	12
Continue to improve the physical infrastructure of Essex County College to better meet the needs of our students and enhance the student learning experience	
ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS FOR FY 2024	13
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	14
IMPLEMENTATION OF <i>STUDENTS FIRST</i> : STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024	17
STRATEGIC PLANNING CALENDAR	18
APPENDICES	20
A. Development of <i>STUDENTS FIRST</i> : Strategic Plan 2019-2024	
B. Essex County College Leadership	



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year, as we celebrate 55 years of success, Essex County College will be embarking on the fifth and final year of *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. As this major phase of planning draws to a close, the College community will come together throughout the upcoming year to reflect upon our challenges and successes, as we join voices to chart a path forward in our next five-year strategic plan.

Since late 2019, *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024* began guiding the College toward its envisioned future. In the first year of the Plan's implementation, we experienced unforeseen challenges and realities propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic. During these difficult times, *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024* guided the College to focus on what matters most – our students. With hard work and resolve, we remained focused on the success of our students, who achieved historically high on-time completion rates.

Amid the pandemic, ECC also began setting its sights on its next major challenge – its first Middle States Self-Study in over ten years. Working together, the College faithfully committed itself to making the process a fully inclusive, college-wide endeavor, and embraced the process as an opportunity for institutional improvement through honest self-appraisal and self-reflection, coupled with bold action.

In June of 2023, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) publicly announced the accreditation reaffirmation of Essex County College and concluded that ECC was in full compliance with each of the Commission's 15 Requirements of Affiliation and 7 Standards of Accreditation. The praise and commendations found in the Evaluation Team Report serve as external validation of our unwavering dedication to our mission, vision, and values, and how we effectively operationalize that commitment through our strategic planning efforts.

While there is still work to be done, the positive impact of *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024*, in guiding the institution forward, is already evident. From improved fiscal stability, significant increases in retention and completion rates, the successful completion of major capital projects, including the new West Essex Campus scheduled to open in August of 2023, and a successful Middle States reaffirmation, ECC has effectively laid a solid foundation to further build upon in its next strategic plan.

As we begin shaping our next strategic plan, I invite all members of the College to lend their voices to the upcoming College Council Town Halls that will take place throughout the year. These college-wide events are intended to encourage an ongoing dialogue, spanning all levels and areas of the College.

Finally, to the valued members of our vibrant campus community – take pride in our great accomplishments. We can all claim proud ownership of ECC's achievements as each of us plays an important role in the continued success of our institution.

Dr. Augustine A. Boakye
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.



GOAL I

Re-establish financial stability to ensure a sustainable future for Essex County College.

ANNUAL TARGETS

- Build an additional financial reserve of \$2,000,000 over the prior year, by the close of FY 2024

OBJECTIVES & ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Strengthen the institution’s budgetary system to better support the achievement of our strategic projects and activities.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Continue to refine the step-by-step annual process of tracking and monitoring the budget in alignment with the College’s resources and strategic activities.

B. Develop an organized grant application and grant management process.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Finalize the process for the timely submission of grant applications.
- ii. Continue to coordinate with Finance to ensure fund utilization is in accordance with Grant guidelines.
- iii. In partnership with Academic Affairs, develop a systematic process for the execution of the Perkins grant with a renewed focus of the CLNA process.



C. Coordinate with the Foundation Board and the Alumni Association to raise funds for the institution.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Coordinate with the Foundation Board to identify, develop, and pursue fund raising opportunities
- ii. Coordinate with Alumni to increase active membership.
- iii. Coordinate with alumni to develop strategies for increased scholarship fundraising.

D. Develop and implement streamlined and efficient accounting practices with enhanced internal controls.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Continue monthly reporting of the G5, Bursar, and Financial Aid reconciliation.
- ii. Continue the mini audit reporting process, discuss with recipients, and make improvements.
- iii. Ensure the audited financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2023, are completed, and submitted to the Board of Trustees on time (by December 2023).
- iv. Review, design, and implement a time and attendance process to track and optimize employee productivity.
- v. Develop and implement a succession planning process that will help the institution better identify, fill, and train for key positions while fostering a culture of commitment and long-term planning in all areas of the College.



GOAL II

Maximize the impact of our academic programs and non-credit workforce development on the local community and labor market by increasing the number of students served.

ANNUAL TARGETS

- Increase enrollment yield by 3 percent over Fall 2023 in Fall 2024
- Increase Student Credit Hours by 3 percent over FY 2023 in FY 2024
- Increase total non-credit clock hours* by 3 percent over FY 2023 in FY 2024

** Non-credit clock hours include non-credit open enrollment and customized training clock hours combined.*

OBJECTIVES & ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Improve communication and outreach to current students, prospective students, and the community at large.

Related FY 2024 activities

- Find innovative ways to reach all market segments and create targeted marketing initiatives for all campuses
- Continue to improve the 3-year dynamic Marketing Plan and execute the plan accordingly.
- Continue to improve the newly designed College's Website.
- Continue the newly expanded mailing to County residents which is coordinated by Community, Continuing Education, and Workforce Development to include information on Associate and Certificate programs.



B. Expand recruitment initiatives targeting all prospective markets.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Continue to execute the 3-year dynamic Enrollment Management Plan.
- ii. Design recruitment activities targeting local high school graduates.
- iii. Develop and implement a grant-based initiative to improve the recruitment of stop-out students and adult learners.
- iv. Coordinate with the local high schools to engage students with college readiness in our dual enrollment program.
- v. Design and execute recruitment strategies to increase enrollment at the West Essex Campus and FOCUS Extension Center that will be carried out in concert with the completion of the new structure.
- vi. Develop linkages between credit and non-credit offerings for the purpose of creating learner centered pathways.
- vii. Conduct a market analysis to construct a marketing strategy to increase out-of-county online and virtual enrollment.

C. Streamline and revise the student onboarding process to ensure equitable access and a smooth transition to Essex County College.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Design and implement new onboarding processes and provide cross-functional training to improve the enrollment yield.





GOAL III

Continue to innovate our academic and student support programs to improve student persistence and on-time completion.

ANNUAL TARGETS

- Increase 1-year retention rate by 2 percent over the Fall 2022 cohort, for the Fall 2023 cohort
- Increase 3-year graduation rate by 0.5 percent over the Fall 2020 cohort, for the Fall 2021 cohort.

OBJECTIVES & ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Develop and implement strategic retention initiatives.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Develop a cross-functional team/committee representing Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management, to develop a more centralized advising model.
- ii. Continue to evaluate the efficacy of the newly implemented FYE 097 and adjust where necessary.
- iii. Strategically expand our capacity to offer multiple learning modalities to best accommodate all learners.
- iv. Continue to evaluate the efficacy of the newly designed accelerated developmental English and Mathematics courses.

B. Enhance learning support systems and wraparound services to promote student success.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Design a holistic, wraparound support system that will meet the needs of students during their educational journey.
- ii. Provide effective orientations and tutorials to help students navigate the College's online student support systems.
- iii. Continue to design student support services at the West Essex Campus and FOCUS Extension Center that will be rolled out in concert with the completion of the new structure.
- iv. Raise awareness about the mental health continuum, reduce stigma associated with mental illness, promote help seeking behaviors and emotional well-being practices, and provide suicide prevention education through outreach events.

C. Design and implement professional development and training for faculty and staff.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Continue to build on the implemented customer service training program.
- ii. Implement a comprehensive compliance training program.
- iii. Implement a comprehensive classroom technology and management program to support faculty.
- iv. The College will work to increase and advertise training opportunities to faculty through the Faculty Development Committee and increase the amount of in-house programming offered at the Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence.

D. Full implementation, including provision of appropriate training, of software platforms that will enhance student services and retention.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Continue to utilize the Qless system to enhance the student service experience.
- ii. Continue to push towards full implementation of the Customer Relations Management (CRM) system in order to produce a more effective onboarding experience.
- iii. Develop a workflow/process, including communication and training on the use of DegreeWorks for the degree auditing process.
- iv. Develop and finalize a process for capturing non-credit application and enrollment data in Elevate.
- v. Upgrade of Touchnet.
- vi. Continue the training and implementation of the Ready App with focus on faculty, academic coordinators, and advisor/mentors, and student support assistants.

E. Develop processes and activities that promote student transfer and articulation.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Redesign advisement processes to ensure a smooth transfer process from ECC to four-year institutions.
- ii. Coordinate and renew articulation agreements between ECC and four-year institutions.
- iii. Develop a sustainable system for tracking ECC graduates, beginning with the Class of Fall 2021 FTFTDS Cohort and continuing with future cohorts
- iv. Develop and implement annual transfer events which include transfer fairs, internships, and opportunities for individual consultations.



GOAL IV

Continue to improve the physical infrastructure of Essex County College to better meet the needs of our students and enhance the student learning experience.

OBJECTIVES & ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Renovation of the West Essex Campus.

Related FY 2024 activities/Annual Targets

- i. West Essex - Phase 3. - Complete the main construction
- ii. West Essex - Complete the new Parking Deck Construction
- iii. West Essex - Complete the installation of the new Soccer field

B. Renovation of the Gymnasium.

Related FY 2024 activities/Annual Targets

- i. Gymnasium Renovation Phase III - Complete the gym showers and storages: walls, lights, ceiling, floor, etc



C. Complete all necessary capital projects to ensure a safe, effective, and welcoming environment for our students.

Related FY 2024 activities/Annual Targets

- i. Renovate Public Safety Headquarters
- ii. Create English Lab
- iii. Renovate the Cafeteria serving area
- iv. Revise and fully implement the College's Facility Management & Maintenance Master Plan
- v. Outline a plan for implementation of a "One Stop Student Services" center for the Newark campus
- vi. Outline a plan for implementation of a new Learning Center.
- vii. Outline a plan for the renovation of the library, 3rd floor
- viii. LED Lighting Fixtures Retrofit - Phase II Hallways, Offices, and remaining areas in need of fixture and light updates.
- ix. Fire alarm System and equipment upgrade - Newark Campus.
- x. Center for Technology Renovation - Redesign classroom layouts, an additional classroom, a new learning community space, updated restrooms, and main entrance and exterior enhancements.
- xi. Phase I - HVAC - Install new modern energy-efficient HVAC ventilation and air quality improvement system in the Penthouses, Child Development Center, and Center for Technology building.
- xii. Renovation of the 5th and 6th floors - Replace ceiling tiles and carpet flooring, add new light fixtures and finishes, and new layouts in the Accounting and Purchasing Departments.
- xiii. Parking Lots Gates Upgrades - Install new gates system in the Parking Deck and Parking Lot G.
- xiv. Complete the overhaul of signage throughout the Newark campus.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS FOR FY 2024

FOCUS I

Ensure the College's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB) continues to serve the diverse needs of its students, staff, faculty, and the community at large.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Identify and appoint members to the College's EDIB Committee, to serve for an initial three-year period, and to oversee the College's EDIB initiatives.
- ii. Develop assessment procedures and tools to gather feedback and collect data from the College community and stakeholders.
- iii. Develop an EDIB plan with measurable targets based on the EDIB Committee's evaluation of the College's current EDIB practices and needs.
- iv. Collaborate with stakeholders and cross-Departments for implementation of the College's EDIB Plan.

FOCUS II

Continue to foster institutional improvement through assessment, evaluation, and systematic planning and accountability processes.

Related FY 2024 activities

- i. Develop and implement an internal reporting and analytics platform utilizing Tableau that will include hierarchal reporting and dashboards for year-over-year, census-based, internal surveys, and student learning assessment.
- ii. Enhance internal accountability reporting by better streamlining administrative unit assessment, strategic activity reporting, and improving vertical communication within the reporting system.
- iii. Continue refining the existing ECC Competency, General Education, and Program Assessment processes to further incorporate faculty involvement via the Academic Assessment Advisory Committee.
- iv. Expand the current program assessment process to develop and implement a process for standardizing and embedding assessment measures into the curriculum for mastery level courses.
- v. Continue refining and implementing the newly developed Academic Program Review process, to ensure an effective and sustainable process takes root.
- vi. Design and implement a sustainable portfolio assessment process for the following generalized programs; General Science, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences.
- vii. Identify and implement a data collection tool to support the improved tracking of student and employee complaints, assessment of trends, challenges and delays, and overall complaint response time, in order to support the areas of Student Affairs and Human Resources.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024 outlines what Essex County College will be working to achieve over the next five years. The 7 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*: Strategic Plan 2019-2024 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.

In the 2021 update of the Strategic Plan, the goals and objectives were revised and refocused. Therefore, the Key Performance Indicators were updated to reflect the annual measurable targets set forth under the revised goals for the remaining three years of the Plan.





GOAL I - Re-establish financial stability to ensure a sustainable future for Essex County College.

Key Performance Indicator

FY 2024 Target

Financial Reserve Amount

\$2,000,000 increase over prior year

GOAL II - Maximize the impact on our local community and labor market by increasing the number of students served and strategically expanding our capacity.

Key Performance Indicator

FY 2024 Target

Enrollment Yield

3% increase over prior year

Total Student Credit Hours

3% increase over prior year

Total Non-Credit Clock Hours*

3% increase over prior year

** Includes both non-credit open enrollment clock hours and customized training clock hours combined.*

GOAL III - Continue to innovate our academic and student support programs to improve student onboarding, persistence and on-time completion.

Key Performance Indicator

FY 2024 Target

One-Year Retention Rate

2% increase over prior year

Three-Year Graduation Rate

0.5% increase over prior year

GOAL IV - Continue to improve the physical infrastructure of Essex County College to better meet the needs of our students and enhance the student learning experience.

Key Performance Indicator

Successful completion of the following capital projects by the close of FY 2024.

- West Essex - Phase III. - Complete the main construction
- West Essex - Complete the new Parking Deck Construction
- West Essex - Complete the installation of the new Soccer field
- Gymnasium Renovation Phase III - Complete the gym showers and storages: walls, lights, ceiling, floor, etc
- Renovate Public Safety Headquarters
- Create English Lab
- Renovate the Cafeteria serving area
- Revise and fully implement the College's Facility Management & Maintenance Master Plan
- Outline a plan for implementation of a "One Stop Student Services" center for the Newark campus
- Outline a plan for implementation of a new Learning Center.
- Outline a plan for the renovation of the library, 3rd floor
- LED Lighting Fixtures Retrofit - Phase II Hallways, Offices, and remaining areas in need of fixture and light updates.
- Fire alarm System and equipment upgrade - Newark Campus.
- Center for Technology Renovation - Redesign classroom layouts, an additional classroom, a new learning community space, updated restrooms, and main entrance and exterior enhancements.
- Phase I - HVAC - Install new modern energy-efficient HVAC ventilation and air quality improvement system in the Penthouses, Child Development Center, and Center for Technology building.
- Renovation of the 5th and 6th floors - Replace ceiling tiles and carpet flooring, add new light fixtures and finishes, and new layouts in the Accounting and Purchasing Departments.
- Parking Lots Gates Upgrades - Install new gates system in the Parking Deck and Parking Lot G.

IMPLEMENTATION OF *STUDENTS FIRST*: STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

As with any plan, the success of *STUDENTS FIRST*: Strategic Plan 2019-2024 is contingent upon the ability to implement it. While the Plan was initially developed with an implementation plan that would be coordinated by a Strategic Planning Committee made up of over twenty-five members of the College, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a more efficient and effective means for oversight of the implementation process. Under the President, Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, the Strategic Planning process was reorganized and the goals and objectives of the Plan were updated and refocused.

Under the version 2.0 of *STUDENTS FIRST*: Strategic Plan 2019-2024, annual activities are identified by the President and Cabinet to chart a clear, transparent course for how the institution intends to meet its vision. For each annual activity, designated reporting officers are identified and using Strategic Planning Online (SPOL), and now Qualtrics, a budgeting plan, targets, and quarterly updates are captured. In addition to these quarterly reports, area heads (Cabinet members) and unit leaders (Deans, Chairs, and Directors) are asked to include updates on these strategic activities in their monthly reporting, as part of our Administrative Unit Assessment process which is also housed in SPOL.

When *STUDENTS FIRST*: Strategic Plan 2019-2024 was updated in August 2021, the decision was made to include the annual activities directly into the Plan. In August of 2022 and 2023, the Plan was updated again (ver 2.1 and 2.2), to reflect the annual activities for the upcoming fiscal year.

Results of our planning efforts are released in an annual 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 results-based conversations, centering around improvement, serve as the first step in the action-planning process.

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:



STRATEGIC PLANNING CALENDAR

April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director of IEPA meets individually with Area Heads to update strategic activities for the upcoming fiscal year
May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director of IEPA meets with the President to finalize updated strategic activities for the upcoming fiscal year
July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area heads and unit managers begin submitting monthly updates on FY 2024 Strategic Activities
August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategic Plan is updated with Strategic Activities for the upcoming fiscal year and is reprinted and republished on the Essex County College website
October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q1 Strategic Planning Dashboard Report is published on the Essex County College website ECC Fall Town Hall with focus on development of the next Strategic Plan
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q2 Strategic Planning Dashboard Report is published on the Essex County College website
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Trustees Annual Strategic Planning Retreat ECC Spring Town Hall with focus on development of the next Strategic Plan Executive Director of IEPA shares results of annual institutional assessments with Cabinet and appropriate unit managers
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q3 Strategic Planning Dashboard Report is published on the Essex County College website
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q4 Strategic Planning Dashboard Report is published on the Essex County College website



APPENDICES

- A. Development of *STUDENTS FIRST*: Strategic Plan 2019-2024
- B. Essex County College Leadership

APPENDIX A

DEVELOPMENT OF *STUDENTS FIRST: STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024*

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 fourth 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: Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. 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.

Phase V. Two years into the Plan, the first major reexamination of *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024* took place over the summer of 2021. The primary objectives for the update was to take several developments into consideration that had occurred after the inaugural release of the Plan. Some of the major developments that necessitated a thorough review included:

- The COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of College operations. This included a major shift in teaching modality and measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment such as contact tracing, extensive cleaning protocols, social distancing, and a face covering mandate. Additionally, student support services adapted quickly to meet student needs with initiatives such as the computer loaner program, expanded food pantry services, and the provision of COVID Relief Grants for enrolled students as per the Higher Education Emergency Relief Acts I, II, and III (HEERF).
- A national economic crisis that necessitated an ongoing reexamination of internal budgeting and resource allocations, as well as a thorough environmental scan of the shifting labor market to ensure the program offerings of Essex County College best serve our community and the local region's economic needs.
- A change in leadership including the College President, Chief Academic Officer, several Cabinet leadership positions, and the addition of a new Chief Financial Officer.
- A major College reorganization necessitated by fiscal realities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Examination of strategic alignment with other major planning documents issued after the inaugural version of the Plan. These documents include:

- The College's Self-Study Design (SSD) with a focus on the design's four institutional priorities. The SSD was approved by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in April of 2021.
- The newly written Enrollment Management Plan, scheduled to be finalized in FY2022
- The newly written Academic Master Plan, scheduled to be finalized in FY2022

Phase V resulted in *STUDENTS FIRST: Strategic Plan 2019-2024, Version 2.0*. The original 5 goals and 21 objectives were reorganized into 4 goals and 17 objectives. Other changes included a shift in implementation oversight from a large Strategic Planning Committee to the area heads (Cabinet) to improve efficiency and streamline the process in a manner reflective of institutional restructuring.

Phase VI. After the successful completion of its MSCHE site visit in March of 2023, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Assessment made enhancements to strategic planning reporting processes. The following changes were incorporated:

- The Administrative Unit Assessment reporting process was combined with the Strategic Activity reporting process into a single, streamlined, online monthly report.
- The platform for reporting was implemented in Qualtrics and included the following new components: automated confirmation emails, automated reminders, and better integration with the monthly one-on-one meetings with the President and Area Heads.
- Development of a public Strategic Planning Dashboard to be published quarterly on the Essex County College website.

APPENDIX B

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Board of Trustees

Ms. Marion A. Bolden, Chair

Dr. Arnold C. Lewis, Vice Chair

Mrs. Jeweline Grimes, Secretary

Mr. Joseph Zarra, Treasurer

Ms. Carmen T. Morales

Ms. Beth Robinson

Ms. Isabel Cruz

Ms. Johanna L. Wright

Rev. Dr. Lanel D. Guyton



Dr. Augustine A. Boakye

President

Cabinet Members

Mr. Alfred Bundy

Executive Director of Institutional Advancement

Ms. Kiswendsida Kaprou

Senior Comptroller

Dr. Keith Kirkland

Dean of Student Affairs

Mr. John Runfeldt

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Assessment

Mr. Mohamed Seddiki

Executive Dean of Administrative & Learning Technologies/Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Ms. Christine Soto

General Counsel

Dr. Elvira M. Vieira

Dean of Community, Continuing Education, and West Essex Campus

Dr. Alvin Williams

Executive Dean of Faculty and Academics

Ms. Shunda Williams

Executive Director of Human Resources





www.essex.edu
973-877-4477

Facebook.com/EssexCountyCollege

Instagram: Essex.county.college

Twitter: @EssexCountyNwk