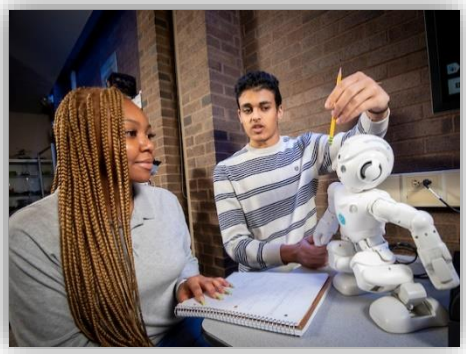
UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN

2024 - 2029



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UCNJ College Mission

Transforming Our Community… One Student at a Time.

Our Mission is to empower students to achieve their goals by providing access to high quality and affordable higher education. As a comprehensive community college, we provide career programs, transfer programs, developmental education, and lifelong-learning opportunities, with a focus on excellence. This mission is sustained through the College's unwavering commitment to the transformational strength of a diverse campus community and an equitable and inclusive learning and work environment for all.

Introduction

The advancement in automated technology systems and globalization created a need for changes in the academic environment. UCNJ - Union College of Union County, New Jersey continues to experience significant shifts due to technological advances, declining enrollments, and other forces that shape higher education.

The Academic Master Plan offers UCNJ a chance to address challenges and leverage the institution's strengths. It presents actionable steps to support the College Mission and provides metrics to measure success in those areas. The Academic Master Plan aims to uphold the College Mission and Vision while focusing on increasing enrollment, improving course completion rates, boosting retention and graduation rates, and preparing students for the future.

The 2024-2029 Academic Master Plan aligns with UCNJ's Mission and guides decision-making processes to support student success. The plan focuses on institutional priorities related to the College Mission, including enrollment, student success and excellence, innovation and institutional effectiveness, and equity and social justice. The creation of the Academic Master Plan involves a collaborative process with faculty and staff, promoting innovative, data-driven decision-making approaches.

Overview and Purpose

The Future of Higher Education

Higher education is facing major changes and periods of "unknowns" (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Llopis, 2022). Due to the pandemic and the rate at which technology and the educational landscape is changing, institutions of higher education are presented with many unique challenges – such as accelerated technological advances, the demographic cliff, preparing students for jobs that do not even exist yet, and competing with other institutions for enrollment (Drozdowski, 2022).

Levine and Van Pelt (2021) offer "new realities" in higher education and argue that the new realities will transform the industrial era model of higher education and establish the template for its global, digital, knowledge economy successor (p. 230). UCNJ remains committed to advancing the College Mission and embracing the "next big thing" in higher education.

The remainder of the Overview and Purpose section will provide current research within higher education and provide recommendations that are linked to UCNJ's Institutional Priorities:

Anytime and Anywhere Education

The evolving preferences of students, particularly digital natives (i.e., a person familiar with technology from an early age), are significantly distinct from the conventional norms of higher education (Llopis, 2022). Unlike their predecessors, digital natives prioritize the flexibility of accessing educational resources at any time and from any place, favoring a personalized learning experience tailored to their specific needs and schedules (Levin & Van Pelt, 2021; Mowreader, 2023).

In sharp contrast, the older adult population (i.e., non-traditional, and non-digital native students), primarily comprised of working women, opts for part-time college attendance, and emphasizes the importance of affordable, unbundled education that caters to their individual requirements. However, both segments of the student population emphasize convenience, top-notch service, and high-quality education, all at a reasonable cost, with a keen focus on paying only for the specific services and activities they utilize (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021).

As such, this shift in educational priorities reflects a growing demand for a more flexible, adaptable, and consumer-centric approach to learning. Additionally, the shift has been driven by the "technological revolution" and advancements in digital technology (i.e., computers, smartphones, apps, the internet, and emerging or advanced technologies) and the changing dynamics of the modern workforce (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Mowreader, 2023). Interestingly, the technological revolution was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and some institutions found themselves unprepared or underprepared to switch to emergency online and remote learning (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021).

However, despite the uncertainty of the pandemic and students' trepidation about remote and online learning, a survey by Wiley University Services found that after colleges went back to

face-to-face instruction, nearly 80% of the learners surveyed chose to stay in an online program and were satisfied with their decision to continue their education online (Wright, Capranos, Dyers, & Magda, 2022, p.10)

Therefore, the technological revolution has catalyzed a significant shift in the expectations and preferences of college students, particularly in their pursuit of more flexible schedules. As digital technologies continue to permeate every aspect of our lives, students are increasingly seeking educational experiences that align with their lifestyles and commitments. The accessibility of online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and asynchronous course delivery has empowered students to tailor their academic pursuits around their individual needs, preferences, and responsibilities. This desire for flexibility reflects a recognition of the evolving nature of work, life, and learning in the digital age, where traditional constraints of time and place are increasingly transcended (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Llopis, 2022).

The advent of the "any time anywhere" philosophy, as exemplified by the technological revolution (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Wright et al., 2022), underscores a transformative mindset. By prioritizing flexibility and accessibility, visionary institutions have an opportunity to redefine the educational space by offering classes that align with students' schedules rather than rigid constraints. This forward-thinking approach not only embraces the opportunities afforded by technological advancements but also reflects a commitment to student-centeredness and adaptability (Wright et al., 2022).

As a result, colleges and universities are responding to this demand by expanding their offerings of flexible schedules, hybrid courses, and alternative modalities, acknowledging the importance of “being flexible” and accommodating the diverse needs and aspirations of their student body (Bumphus, 2023; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). As we continue to navigate the

landscape of higher education in the 21st century, the technological revolution serves as a catalyst for reimagining the traditional college experience and fostering a more inclusive, adaptable, and empowering learning environment for students (Llopis, 2022).

Finally, Levine and Van Pelt (2021), Capranos et al. (2022), and Write et al. (2022) argue that online learning is here to stay. Furthermore, online education fits into the anytime and anywhere, education model. Students can attend any university that offers the program or training they need or want, and students can take classes on their own time without paying for all the "extras" (i.e., student activities) they do not need (Levine and Van Pelt, 2021). For working students, online is often the simplest and easiest path to earn a degree or credential and allows students flexibility to complete schoolwork during times that are convenient for their schedule (Ubell, 2022).

To demonstrate that potential students are looking for online programs and will shop for a school that provides anytime and anywhere education, Wiley University Services survey shows 77% of the respondents choose modality before other factors, and 60% of the respondents claim that if the program they wanted was not available in an online format at the school of their choice, they would find the program online at a different school (Capranos et al., 2022, p. 12). Finally, Wiley Services found that 48% of the respondents are not likely to change to a campus-based program (Capranos et al., 2022, p. 13).

UCNJ demonstrates exceptional resilience and proficiency with a proactive approach to keeping pace with the technological revolution. UCNJ made significant strides in updating its technology infrastructure to enhance the online learning experience for students and faculty alike. Through strategic investments and ongoing initiatives, UCNJ remains at the forefront of educational technology, leveraging cutting-edge tools and platforms to facilitate dynamic and

engaging online instruction. UCNJ also recognizes the evolving needs of its student body and is actively moving towards offering more flexible schedules with a goal to increase course completion rates. By embracing this shift towards greater flexibility, UCNJ aims to accommodate the diverse commitments and preferences of students, empowering them to tailor their educational journey to suit their individual needs so that they complete their degree.

Therefore, UCNJ must remain committed to evolving and embracing the ongoing technological revolution, ensuring that it can effectively serve its student body by providing flexible and accessible educational opportunities. By linking improvements in online learning to UCNJ's institutional priorities, the College can ensure that its online offerings are aligned with its core mission and values. UCNJ must continue to adapt to the changing landscape of education, leveraging technology to enhance the learning experience for its students. This means embracing innovative teaching methods, investing in cutting-edge technology infrastructure, and providing comprehensive support services for online learners. Finally, UCNJ must prioritize offering "anytime and anywhere" educational opportunities, recognizing the diverse needs and circumstances of its student population. By providing flexible scheduling options and accessible online resources, UCNJ can empower students to complete each course and pursue their education on their own terms, regardless of location or time constraints.

Pivot from Inputs to Outputs

The conventional structure of higher education, which has long emphasized rigid timelines, standardized processes, and traditional teaching methodologies, is poised to be overshadowed by a more dynamic and progressive paradigm in the "knowledge economy" (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 223). This emerging model of education places paramount importance on tangible outcomes and a deep-rooted emphasis on the process of learning itself (Parsons, Mason, & Soldner, 2016). With a clear focus on practical application and the acquisition of relevant skills, this shift signifies a departure from the previous industrial era framework, ushering in a new era that champions adaptability, critical thinking, and a holistic understanding of the ever-evolving landscape of knowledge and information.

However, institutions of higher education are still working under the processes and procedures that were developed in response to the industrial revolution, such as the Carnegie unit, where success is measured in the time it takes for a student to graduate (Brown, 2022; Drozdowski, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). In addition, according to Levine and Van Pelt (2021) "the Carnegie unit is outdated and inequitable" and in conjunction with the demographic cliff, enrollments will continue to decline without reform (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021).

Important to note, equity is a major issue and topic within higher education. According to Levine and Van Pelt (2021), "in the current model of higher education, equity means enabling all students to have access to comparable facilities, professors, and programs for the same period of time" (p. 224). However, "real equity would mean making it possible for all students to achieve the same outcomes... Equity is necessarily about access to equal outcomes, not access to equal process or time" (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 224). Equity means "fairness" and that every person is afforded the same opportunities and resources they need depending on their specific

situation (Cahalan, Addison, Brunt, Patel, & Perna, 2021). Therefore, not every student can or will complete their education in the timeframes set by the federal government.

As such, the technological revolution has led to the new “knowledge economy” and the knowledge economy is grounded in outcomes, not fixed time and processes. The new knowledge economy, under this principle, has a focus on equity, competency-based education, and the acquisition of knowledge (Cahalan et al., 2021; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). That is, the shift goes from teaching to learning, and success is measured by students achieving mastery of the subject in their own time and not within the arbitrary Carnegie unit time constraints.

By shifting the focus from teaching to learning, UCNJ ensures that success is measured by students' genuine acquisition of knowledge and skills. Through this approach, UCNJ aligns itself with the future of education, preparing students to thrive in the dynamic landscape of the knowledge economy. Through innovative teaching methodologies and a focus on practical application, UCNJ is equipping students with relevant skills essential for success in today's fast-paced world. Also, by prioritizing adaptability, critical thinking, and a holistic understanding of evolving knowledge, UCNJ is paving the way for a new era of education that is responsive to the needs of the 21st century workforce.

Colleges are judged by their graduation rates within a specified amount of time (Brown, 2022). Therefore, the question becomes, how can a college work within the new knowledge economy while still working under federal and state guidelines for graduation rates?

Just-In-Time Education

Potential students are looking for "just-in-time education". Just-in-time education is "present oriented and more immediate, teaching students the skills and knowledge they need right now…" (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 226). Just-in-time education is driven by the outcomes students want to achieve. Just-in time education encompasses convenient flexible schedules, affordability, and an opportunity to use their acquired knowledge immediately.

This shift in perspective underscores the growing relevance of specialized, skill-based certifications that align closely with the demands of an ever-evolving professional landscape. As the focus pivots towards the immediate applicability of knowledge and skills, this trend represents a fundamental reevaluation of the value of education, emphasizing the critical role of timely, industry-relevant expertise in the emerging global workforce (Cahalan et al., 2021; Llopis, 2022).

Also, when discussing the demographic cliff, institutions find themselves looking to the non-traditional student to fill the gap. However, many of the non-traditional students are not interested in attending "traditional" college where they come to campus and join in activities. Rather, the non-traditional working student is looking to up-skill or re-skill by obtaining a certificate or some other credential that they can use right away and will allow them to earn a higher salary and advance in their career (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021).

Finally, micro-credentials and badges are not "new to higher education" and certificate programs are common at two-year schools (Perkins, 2017). For example, in 2018 two-years schools granted 852,504 associate degrees and 579,8222 certificates (Levin & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 227). Importantly, higher education is "experiencing declining degree stature" where there is more of a demand for "just-in-time certificate programs" (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 229). The

future of higher education includes the implementation and dissemination of certificates and micro-credentials.

UCNJ is addressing the challenges posed by the demographic cliff by attending to the needs of non-traditional students. Recognizing that many working professionals seek to up-skill or re-skill without committing to traditional campus-based programs, UCNJ offers certificate programs tailored to immediate career advancement. By providing accessible pathways to obtain credentials that directly translate to higher salaries and career progression, UCNJ empowers students to achieve their professional goals efficiently. Leveraging the prevalence of certificate programs at two-year schools, UCNJ acknowledges the demand for just-in-time learning opportunities and prioritizes the dissemination of micro-credentials and badges.

UCNJ has also developed a robust Career Services department and is expanding the number of internships available to students. These internships play a crucial role in helping students gain real-world experience and establish professional connections, ultimately enhancing their career placement prospects. By investing in career services and opportunities, UCNJ is committed to supporting student success and preparing graduates for their future careers.

As higher education evolves, UCNJ stays dedicated to addressing the shifting needs of students and the workforce by adopting innovative approaches to internships, credentialing, and skill development.

A Demographic Sea Change

As previously mentioned, the Carnegie unit is outdated and a barrier to success outcomes (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021), and the demographic cliff will continue to impact enrollments, especially in the Northeast. Therefore, acknowledging the demographic make-up of the college population is essential to decisions about the "next big thing" for the College (Drozdowski, 2022).

Research suggests by 2045 Hispanics will constitute nearly a quarter (24.5%) of the population and Blacks and Asians together will represent another fifth (21%) of the nation (p. 115). Furthermore, by 2060, Hispanics will make up nearly a third (32%) of the US population under the age of 19 and Asians and Blacks will constitute smore than a fifth (22%) of the population (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 115).

UCNJ is a Hispanic Serving Institution, and UCNJ's demographic make-up aligns with Levine and Van Pelt's statistics. Therefore, UCNJ has an advantage and opportunity to increase enrollments despite the demographic cliff.

UNION COLLEGE ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE, 2022

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS BY RACE / ETHNICITY, GENDER AND AGE, FALL 2021:

Race/Ethnicity	Full-time	Percent of Full-time	Part-time	Percent of Part-time	Total	Percent of Total
Nonresident alien	50	1.4%	12	0.3%	62	0.8%
Hispanic/Latino	1,512	43.4%	1,765	39.7%	3,277	41.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	0.2%	14	0.3%	20	0.3%
Asian	126	3.6%	208	4.7%	334	4.2%
Black or African American	1,023	29.3%	1,349	30.4%	2,370	29.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	4	0.1%	15	0.3%	19	0.2%
White	541	15.5%	717	16.1%	1,258	15.9%
Two or More Races	96	2.8%	116	2.6%	212	2.7%
Unknown	128	3.7%	248	5.6%	376	4.7%
Total	**3,486**	**100%**	**4,444**	**100%**	**7,930**	**100%**

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey, 2021

Additionally, older adults who are more likely to attend college are women who attend part time and only come to campus to attend class. These students are looking for convenience when attending an in person class (campus location close to home and easy parking), they want classes that are offered at convenient times, they want high quality instruction, they expect low tuition and fees, they want credits previously earned to apply to the degree program, they do not want to pay for services and activities they do not use, and they want great customer service when dealing with registration and financial aid (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, p. 135).

The non-traditional students referenced by Levine and Van Pelt (2021) fit the population at UCNJ as noted on the Institutional Profile charts displayed below. Many of the UCNJ students also receive financial assistance, and undoubtedly handle a host of other responsibilities that keep them from completing their courses and finishing their education. Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to surveys that the College administers such as the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (and the like) to determine the importance and satisfaction of the College's services, and then determine what the College can do to improve the student experience.

UNION COLLEGE ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE, 2022

STUDENTS ENROLLED BY GENDER AND ENROLLMENT STATUS, FALL 2021

Gender	Full-time	Percent of Full-time	Part-time	Percent of Part-time	Total	Percent of Total
Male	1,585	45.5%	1,358	30.6%	2,943	37.1%
Female	1,901	54.5%	3,086	69.4%	4,987	62.9%
Total	**3,486**	**100%**	**4,444**	**100%**	**7,930**	**100%**

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey, 2021 (Census)

Female students represented over sixty percent (62.9%) of the total student body and more than half (54.5%) of the full-time enrollment. More than thirty percent (37.1%) of the total student body was male, with more male students attending Union on a full-time basis than on a part-time basis.

STUDENTS ENROLLED BY AGE GROUP AND ENROLLMENT STATUS, FALL 2021

Age Group	Full-time	Percent of Full-time	Part-time	Percent of Part-time	Total	Percent of Total
Less than 18	18	0.5%	66	1.5%	84	1.1%
18-19	1,532	43.9%	435	9.8%	1,967	24.8%
20-21	851	24.4%	698	15.7%	1,549	19.5%
22-24	404	11.6%	816	18.4%	1,220	15.4%
25-29	317	9.1%	859	19.3%	1,176	14.8%
30-34	170	4.9%	615	13.8%	785	9.9%
35-39	87	2.5%	348	7.8%	435	5.5%
40-49	77	2.2%	440	9.9%	517	6.5%
50-64	29	0.8%	150	3.4%	179	2.3%
65+	1	0.0%	17	0.4%	18	0.2%
Unknown	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**3,486**	**100%**	**4,444**	**100%**	**7,930**	**100%**

Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey, 2021

Three-quarters (75.6%) of the degree- and non-degree-seeking students at Union County College were under thirty years old. The two largest groups of full-time students were between 18-19 years old (43.9%) and 20-21 years old (24.4%). Part-time students were more likely to be a bit older with over half (51.5%) falling between 22 and 34 years old.

UNION COLLEGE ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE, 2022

4. NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER EACH FEDERAL-, STATE- AND INSTITUTION-FUNDED AID PROGRAM, FY 2021:

Federal Aid, 2020-21	**Recipients**	**Amount** (ROUNDED)	**Avg. Per Recipient** (ROUNDED)
Pell Grants	4,010	$15,280,000	$3,810
College Work Study	79	$204,000	$2,582
Perkins Loans	0	$0	-
SEOG	1,752	$509,000	$291
PLUS Loans	19	$92,000	$4,842
Stafford Loans (Subsidized)	568	$1,646,000	$2,898
Stafford Loans (Unsubsidized)	716	$2,752,000	$3,844
Smart and ACG or other	0	$0	-
CARES Act/HEERF Student Aid	4,512	$9,309,000	$2,063
State Aid, 2020-21	**Recipients**	**Amount** (ROUNDED)	**Avg. Per Recipient** (ROUNDED)
Tuition Aid Grant	2,023	$3,389,000	$1,675
Educational Opportunity Fund	203	$269,000	$1,325
Outstanding Scholar Recruitment Program	92	$115,000	$1,250
Distinguished Scholars	0	$0	-
Urban Scholars	4	$4,000	$1,000
NJ Stars	83	$276,000	$3,325
Community College Opportunity Grant	1,481	$3,294,000	$2,224
NJ Class Loan	5	$39,000	$7,800
Institutional Aid, 2020-21	**Recipients**	**Amount** (ROUNDED)	**Avg. Per Recipient** (ROUNDED)
Scholarships and Grants	850	$1,810,000	$2,129
Institutional Loans	0	$0	-

Source: NJ IPEDS Form 41 – Student Financial Aid Report Survey

Prepare Students and Workers to Do Jobs That Don't Even Exist Yet

In response to the transformative forces of the global, digital, and knowledge economy, higher education is poised for profound change (Drozdowski, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). This narrative encapsulates the imperative for adaptation: higher education must undergo a fundamental overhaul to align with the demands of the modern era. In this new landscape, institutions are compelled to innovate to remain relevant and effective. The era of passive learning is moving to dynamic, interactive modes of education that leverage digital technologies and global connectivity (Brown, 2022).

As articulated by Levine and Van Pelt (2021), this shift underscores the necessity for institutions to embrace flexibility, technological integration, and a deep understanding of the evolving needs of learners in the digital age. Therefore, colleges must examine the extent to which the "traditional model" of education limits access to education. Higher education used to be a "luxury" for the few, but now earning a degree and stacking credentials has become a necessity. And while a "traditional education" is still necessary, skills-based training that is available to people at any point in their lives is the wave of the future (Llopis, 2022).

The current method of higher education is outdated (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021), and systems need to be transformed to keep up with the demands of the changing times and the requirements of future employers. Around the world, potential learners would benefit from accessible, flexible, high-quality education. The problem, however, is that many people do not have the money, time, or luxury to move out of the labor market and into a full-time degree program that would help them obtain the next level in their current jobs (Brown, 2022; Finley, 2021).

Despite the incredible longevity of higher education institutions and the staying power of the degree as a credential, institutions of higher education are subject to disruptive forces of technological change on a global scale (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021; Llopis, 2022). Colleges must acknowledge and address the pace at which technology evolves, and to fully embrace their missions, higher education institutions and educators must think differently about the suite of educational "products" they offer. College's need "new forms of content delivery, new ways to assess learning, and new ways to certify that a learner has mastered various concepts and skills" (Brown, 2022). As higher education institutions adapt to these evolving dynamics, the essence of learning is being redefined, emphasizing accessibility, customization, and a heightened focus on equipping students with the practical skills and knowledge required to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly evolving global landscape.

Equity is also a major factor. Institutions must ensure that all students, especially underrepresented, marginalized students, have access to outcomes, opportunities, and resources. While it may seem easy to create innovative, interesting, and deeper learning environments with students, not all students have support at home or social capital and resources to be successful in college (Cahalan et al., 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to figure out how to create these learning opportunities for students who do not have financial means or other proper supports. Tate (2018) offers the idea of "inclusive innovation" which means marginalized groups are included in a solution-based conversation. Involving students in the decision-making process for the equity and barrier issues they face is the true meaning of innovation.

However, the question remains, how do we prepare students for future jobs that don't even exist yet? Jeffrey Brown, Dean of Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois, suggests that educators need to begin to think differently about the traditional curriculum offered.

He calls for “new forms” of content delivery, learning assessment and ways to certify mastery of various concepts and skills (Brown, 2022). However, while “new forms” of content delivery are necessary, colleges must also be aware of equity issues and that a student’s level of “college readiness” is also a barrier to their success.

Higher Education also needs to be open to a curriculum that is less structured than a traditional curriculum and more accommodating to future students whereby creating new alternatives for our students such as re-skilling (credentials or micro-credentials) become more available (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). Credentials or “micro-credentials” are awarded for mastery of skills for the demonstration of very specific competencies (Perkins, 2017).

Interestingly, some experts argue that we cannot predict the future or be able to determine what the next “hot job” will be; therefore, institutions of higher education should help prepare students for these unknown jobs by developing and improving their “soft skills.” The term soft skills cover a wide range of skills as diverse as teamwork, time management, empathy, and delegation. Employers are looking for candidates who demonstrate good communication skills, empathy, strong critical thinking skills, the ability to work responsibly and ethically alone or with a team, and the ability to make hard decisions that showcase their leadership abilities (Barnard, 2019).

In today's rapidly evolving job market, students need more than just academic knowledge to succeed; they must also be equipped with the skills to navigate and adapt to future career landscapes. As technology continues to advance and create new, unknown job opportunities, institutions of higher education play a critical role in preparing students for these emerging fields. By focusing on the development and improvement of "soft skills" such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability, schools can help students stay agile and thrive in

dynamic work environments. This holistic approach to education ensures graduates are not only well-versed in their chosen fields but also capable of excelling in an ever-changing professional landscape.

Additionally, embracing advanced technologies such as generative AI is crucial for preparing students for the modern workforce. As industries rapidly evolve with the integration of AI and machine learning, students need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to navigate this changing landscape. By incorporating generative AI into the curriculum, UCNJ can offer students hands-on experience with cutting-edge tools and methodologies, allowing them to develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities in new ways.

UCNJ is taking proactive steps to prepare students for the unpredictable nature of future job markets by prioritizing the development of “soft skills” and advance technologies. Understanding that the landscape of employment is constantly evolving and that the next "hot job" cannot always be predicted, UCNJ focuses on providing opportunities for students that are universally valuable in any professional setting.

By equipping students with strong critical thinking skills, communication skills, ethical decision-making abilities, and leadership qualities, UCNJ ensures that graduates are well-prepared to adapt and thrive in dynamic and uncertain environments, regardless of the specific demands of future roles. Finally, to compete for enrollment with traditional and non-traditional institutions, UCNJ must be forward thinking about how to provide services and skills training for students to be successful in the workforce.

Competing with Colleges and Universities on a Global Basis

The research underlines a shift in the higher education landscape, predicting the entry of "non-traditional" content providers into the marketplace. This impending influx is anticipated to intensify competition among educational institutions, consequently broadening the array of choices available to consumers. As a result, students will find themselves at the forefront of a diverse and dynamic educational marketplace, empowered with an unprecedented range of options from which to select. This proliferation of choices, coupled with the heightened competition, is expected to exert pressure on "traditional" educational providers. This changing dynamic will prompt traditional institutions to adapt to evolving consumer demands and emerging market trends to maintain their competitive edge in an increasingly dynamic and competitive environment (Levin & Van Pelt, 2021).

Additionally, Brown (2022) argues that "our competition will not just come from other educational institutions in our region, rather, we will be competing with colleges and universities on a global basis and with a vast array of alternative credential providers in the private sector" (p. 3). In other words, colleges must reinvent themselves quickly or risk alienating a generation of students seeking different options (Drozdowski, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). To remain competitive, traditional educational providers must adapt to evolving technology, prioritize skills-based training, and enhance affordability and accessibility. Leveraging technology is essential to reaching individuals residing in areas where quality education may not be readily accessible (Brown, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021).

Utilizing technology could help reduce the barriers to success and increase a college's competitive edge. Many students struggle financially or are unable to balance going to school, family life and maintaining a full-time job. Being able to choose the courses they need at a time

that fits into their schedule could reduce some of the challenges working around a class schedule, and thereby increase enrollment. Higher Education also needs to take advantage of multiple modalities such as online platforms or blended/hybrid classes where students can manage their schedule and have options and opportunities to meet face-to-face with an instructor (Drozdowski, 2022).

Recognizing the transformative potential of technology, and by embracing innovative teaching methods and incorporating technology into its curriculum, UCNJ ensures that students receive an education that prepares them for success in an increasingly digital world. UCNJ strives to make higher education attainable for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. By embracing these principles, UCNJ remains at the forefront of shaping a more inclusive and forward-thinking educational landscape.

Next, the research indicates that institutions of higher education will now compete with a vast array of alternative or "non-traditional" credential providers in the private sector (Drozdowski, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). Technology companies like Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft are offering their own badges, certificates, and credentials and institutions like Northeastern University will accept these credentials and certificates as prior learning credits, thus shortening the time it takes to complete a degree (Brown, 2022).

One way of keeping up with current trends is by developing relationships with these technology companies and local employers. Achieving and sustaining the alignment of educational outcomes with workforce needs plays an essential role in promoting both individual and socioeconomic mobility and national economic growth and competitiveness. Another option could be to hold classes on the employers' sites. This would accommodate more learners and increase enrollment. Scheduling flexibility appears to be the answer where a student can have

more flexibility to work around their own schedules so they may earn a degree while being able to carry on other responsibilities (Finley, 2021).

To remain current with prevailing trends, UCNJ should seek to develop partnerships with technology companies (e.g., Amazon) to offer students the ability to earn micro-credentials, internships, and employment. UCNJ should also develop partnerships with local employers, a strategy pivotal in ensuring educational outcomes harmonize with workforce demands. The alternative approach of conducting classes directly at employers' sites, which would facilitate broader participation and bolster enrollment rates, is also an attractive option.

By offering scheduling flexibility, UCNJ enables students to balance their academic pursuits with other responsibilities, thereby affording them the opportunity to earn a degree while meeting their diverse commitments. This adaptability not only enhances accessibility but also reinforces UCNJ's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its student body and the broader community.

The Future of Higher Education

There is a critical necessity for institutions to overhaul their existing frameworks and realign their strategies with the imperatives of the global, digital, and knowledge economy. This transformative journey demands a comprehensive reorientation toward an outcome-based educational model, characterized by curricula that are adaptable and responsive to the evolving demands of the contemporary professional landscape (Drozdowski, 2022; Levin & Van Pelt, 2021; Llopis, 2022).

While higher education is changing at warp speed and the future is uncertain, the steps a college needs to take to stay relevant are clear. For example, the importance of data in decision-making cannot be overstated. Data serves as the foundation upon which informed decisions are built, offering insights into trends, patterns, and potential outcomes. Utilizing data allows organizations to move beyond intuition and anecdotal evidence, fostering evidence-based decision-making that is grounded in empirical evidence.

By harnessing the power of data analytics, decision-makers can identify opportunities, mitigate risks, and optimize processes with greater precision and efficiency. Moreover, in today's dynamic and interconnected world, data-driven decision-making is indispensable for staying competitive, adapting to changing market conditions, and achieving strategic objectives. Embracing a data-centric approach not only enhances organizational performance but also empowers leaders to make more confident and impactful choices that drive sustainable success (Farrell, 2023).

In an era where outcomes matter more than ever, course completion rates offer a profound insight into student success. Course completion rates encapsulate not just the academic progress of students, which is an indicator of completion, but also the efficacy of teaching

methodologies, institutional support systems, and overall student engagement. As higher education evolves to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world, course completion rates emerge as a pivotal metric guiding this transformation. Embracing the significance of course completion rates signal a paradigm shift towards a more outcome-oriented approach in higher education. Institutions that harness course completion rates to refine their strategies, enhance support structures, and optimize learning experiences are paving the path towards a future where student success is paramount.

Next, advanced technologies and specifically artificial intelligence (AI) such as generative AI, is poised to significantly impact the future of higher education by transforming teaching, learning, and administrative processes. AI can provide personalized learning experiences by analyzing student data and tailoring educational content to individual needs and learning styles. This can lead to more effective and engaging educational experiences, helping students achieve better outcomes (Abdous, 2023; Campbell, 2023).

AI-powered tools can assist instructors with grading, assessments, and curriculum design, allowing them to focus more on providing high-quality instruction and mentorship. These tools can also identify students who may need additional support, enabling early interventions and improved retention rates (Abdous, 2023; Campbell, 2023).

AI can enhance access to higher education by providing flexible, online learning opportunities and bridging language barriers through real-time translation services. Furthermore, AI can facilitate lifelong learning and professional development by offering targeted, just-in-time training and skill-building resources. As AI becomes more integrated into higher education, it is crucial to address ethical and privacy concerns, ensuring that AI systems are used responsibly and transparently (Abdous, 2023; Campbell, 2023).

Finally, in the era of "College 3.0," the landscape of higher education is undergoing a significant transformation, marked by a growing emphasis on offering high-value degree programs that equip students with the skills needed to secure family-sustaining wages. As the demands of the global economy evolve, there is a heightened recognition of the importance of aligning educational offerings with market needs. College 3.0 reflects a shift towards outcomes-based education, where institutions prioritize the delivery of programs that lead to tangible career pathways and economic mobility for students. By focusing on high-value degree programs, colleges can ensure that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in today's competitive job market.

Thus, to remain competitive, institutions of higher education must adapt to evolving technology, prioritize skills-based training, and enhance affordability and accessibility. Leveraging technology is essential to reaching individuals residing in areas where quality education may not be readily accessible. By embracing these fundamental shifts, educational institutions can position themselves to not only survive but thrive in the rapidly evolving terrain of the global, digital, knowledge economy. As Levine and Van Pelt (2021) state: “know what business you are in.” UCNJ is in the education business, not the degree business. More importantly, the business of the College is to transform the community through high-quality affordable education and lifelong-learning opportunities, with a focus on excellence. UCNJ must continue to look to the future and cannot go back to pre-pandemic practices.

In the next section Levine and Van Pelt’s “new realities” are discussed and aligned with UCNJ Institutional Priorities.

New Realities

Levine and Van Pelt (2021) concluded with the "impact of new realities" (p. 230) that helped to inform the objectives for the Academic Master Plan. These new realities are summarized and aligned with UCNJ institutional priorities as important factors that will shape the future of UCNJ.

New Reality: Prevalence of competency-based and project-based learning, where students must master specific outcomes for credentials. Assessment will become formative, personalized, and real-time, focusing on guiding competency mastery. **Institutional Priority**: Student Success / Excellence and Equity / Social Justice.

- The prevalence of competency-based learning, where students must master specific outcomes for credentials, is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of student success and excellence in education. Competency-based education allows for greater customization of learning experiences to meet individual student needs. The emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge equips students with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving society. Employers increasingly value candidates who can demonstrate tangible skills and competencies, making competency-based education highly relevant to workforce demands. Institutions that adopt competency-based approaches often experience higher retention and graduation rates, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds (Parsons et al., 2016). Clear learning pathways and targeted support services, such as those provided by student success cohorts like Operation Graduation and Project Achievement, help address barriers to course completion, retention, and graduation, and promote equitable access to education.

New Reality: The educational landscape will diversify to include traditional and nontraditional providers (e.g., Coursera), with a greater demand for just-in-time upskilling and reskilling. **Institutional Priority:** Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment.

- Institutions must innovate to remain relevant in an evolving educational landscape. The emergence of nontraditional providers like Coursera and the demand for just-in-time upskilling signify a shift towards more flexible and accessible learning opportunities. UCNJ needs to embrace these trends by exploring partnerships with such platforms, offering micro-credentials, and facilitating lifelong learning opportunities for its students and alumni. By leveraging innovative approaches to education, such as offering targeted skill development programs, UCNJ can enhance its effectiveness in preparing students for success in a rapidly evolving job market. UCNJ can harness technology and data analytics to identify areas for improvement, streamline administrative processes, and tailor educational offerings to meet the diverse needs of its student body. By providing opportunities for students to engage in continuous skill development, UCNJ can empower them to adapt to changing career demands and pursue personal and professional growth throughout their lives.

New Reality: Certification will combine degrees and micro-credentials, reflected in lifelong competency records on transcripts. **Institutional Priority:** Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success / Excellence.

- The integration of degrees and micro-credentials into lifelong competency records reflects a holistic approach to institutional effectiveness. UCNJ aims to ensure that its educational offerings are not only comprehensive but also adaptive to the evolving needs of students and the job market. By offering a combination of traditional degrees and

micro-credentials, UCNJ can cater to the diverse needs of its student population. The emphasis on lifelong competency records on transcripts is a commitment to tracking and documenting students' skills and achievements beyond traditional degree programs. This approach can help students showcase their abilities to potential employers and adapt to changing career landscapes. By supporting students in acquiring relevant skills and credentials throughout their lives, UCNJ contributes to their long-term success and employability.

New Reality: The transition from analog to digital formats are occurring because "for traditional aged students the internet and digital devices have always been there. The result – digital natives are being taught by digital immigrants at predominantly analog colleges" (p. 149).

Institutional Priority: Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success / Excellence.

- The transition from analog to digital formats in education is intricately connected to the overarching goal of creating a robust and comprehensive education system that empowers every student for a lifetime of success. The transition to digital formats reflects a broader commitment to equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to be active, engaged, and lifelong learners. Digital technologies offer opportunities for students to access information, collaborate with peers, and engage with learning resources beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. By embracing digital formats, educational institutions can foster a culture of continuous learning and empower students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Also, the shift from analog to digital formats encourages educators to adopt innovative teaching methods that go beyond traditional approaches. Digital technologies provide platforms for interactive learning experiences, multimedia resources, and real-world applications of concepts. This fosters

critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability among students, essential attributes for success in the modern workforce and society.

- Additionally, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the future of higher education. AI-driven tools support instructors in various tasks, allowing them to focus on mentorship and high-quality teaching. As AI continues to shape higher education, it is important to address ethical considerations and ensure the responsible use of AI for the benefit of students and educators alike. By embracing AI, higher education institutions can create dynamic and innovative learning environments that prepare students for the challenges of the future.

New Reality: Big data will become a necessity in higher education because "big data allows us to determine how students learn, what errors or misunderstandings they commonly make in mastering a subject, the most effective resources to get them back on track, and their progress toward achieving learning outcomes" (p. 155). **Institutional Priority:** Enrollment, Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success / Excellence.

- The utilization of big data in higher education is closely related to the importance of enrollment statistics and the overall success of UCNJ. Big data analytics allows UCNJ to analyze course completion rates, student learning patterns, identify areas of difficulty, and track progress toward learning outcomes. By understanding how students learn and the challenges they face, UCNJ can implement targeted interventions and support mechanisms to improve student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates). This, in turn, contributes to higher enrollment numbers as satisfied students are more likely to continue their education at UCNJ and recommend it to others. Enrollment numbers are crucial for the financial health of UCNJ. Big data analytics can

provide insights into demographic trends, student preferences, and competitor offerings, enabling UCNJ to tailor its recruitment and marketing strategies effectively. By leveraging big data, UCNJ can identify target demographics, customize outreach efforts, and highlight its unique value proposition to attract prospective students and increase enrollment. In a competitive environment with diverse providers offering similar services, UCNJ must differentiate itself through innovation and best practices that ensure student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates). Big data analytics provide valuable insights into effective teaching methods, curriculum design, and student support services. By leveraging big data, UCNJ can identify innovative approaches, implement evidence-based practices, and continuously improve its offerings to meet the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.

New Reality: Tuition models will evolve towards subscription-based approaches tied to outcome attainment, akin to Coursera's funding strategy. **Institutional Priority:** Enrollment, Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success / Excellence.

- Subscription-based models tied to outcomes emphasize the importance of delivering tangible results and value to students. UCNJ is outcome-oriented, aligning curriculum and teaching methods with the goal of student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates). UCNJ must continually adapt the curriculum to focus on skills that are directly relevant to the job market. This will lead to a more dynamic and responsive approach to education that meets industry needs. UCNJ has invested in data analytics to track student progress and outcomes. This data-driven approach enables continuous improvement, allowing UCNJ to identify effective teaching methods and areas for enhancement.

Organizing Concepts, Focus, and Values

Using the recommendations presented in the last section, the UCNJ institutional priorities will be emphasized to facilitate progress and change:

Institutional Priority #1 – Enrollment. Some of the most important statistics in higher education concern enrollment. Enrollment numbers contribute the College's overall financial success, and higher enrollment numbers provide a level of prestige for the institution. As noted previously, there is increased competition and diverse providers offering the same services as UCNJ. Additionally, harnessing data-driven insights is paramount in driving enrollment strategies for UCNJ. By leveraging analytics, UCNJ can gain valuable insights into prospective students' preferences, behaviors, and needs, enabling them to tailor their recruitment efforts effectively. Data analytics can provide UCNJ with a deeper understanding of demographic trends, regional preferences, and socioeconomic factors influencing enrollment. Armed with this information, UCNJ can develop targeted marketing campaigns that resonate with specific student populations, maximizing their outreach and engagement. Therefore, UCNJ must stand out above the rest through innovation and best practices that ensure student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates).

Institutional Priority #2 – Student Success / Excellence. Utilizing data to enhance student success outcomes (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates) is a transformative approach that empowers UCNJ to better understand and support our students' academic journey. By harnessing data analytics, UCNJ can glean valuable insights into student performance, engagement, and other challenges students face enabling UCNJ to implement

targeted interventions and support mechanisms. Course completion rates are indicative of a student's journey towards retention and graduation. The completion of each course brings students closer to their academic goals and future endeavors, and our commitment lies in ensuring that every student has the necessary support to complete every course they undertake. Because we understand that course completion is fundamental to graduation, we strive to remove barriers and cultivate a culture of perseverance and achievement. Whether it's through personalized guidance, academic support services, or fostering a supportive learning environment, our goal remains unwavering: to empower every student to reach the finish line. By prioritizing course completion rates, we enhance other student success outcomes (i.e., retention and graduation). At UCNJ we provide focused attention to first-generation and most historically marginalized students because these groups drop out at higher rates and have greater need for institutional support. UCNJ currently has student success cohorts such as Operation Graduation, Project Achievement, and Inspire the Future. Other cohort groups include Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) or American Honors. Data shows that the services and benefits for these cohorts results in higher course completion, retention, and graduation rates, and successful outcomes post-graduation. Our commitment is to ensure that each student receives the tools necessary to become not just educated individuals, but lifelong enthusiasts for learning, contributing to a society that values continuous growth and intellectual curiosity.

Institutional Priority #3 – Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness. Institutional effectiveness is the linchpin of organizational success, reflecting the capacity of an institution to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission. It involves a holistic approach to optimizing resources, processes, and strategies to ensure efficiency and meaningful impact. By continually assessing and refining its operations, UCNJ can enhance its overall effectiveness, adapting to the evolving

needs of its stakeholders and the broader environment. This commitment to effectiveness goes beyond mere efficiency; it encompasses the institution's ability to make a positive and sustainable difference in its sphere of influence. In essence, institutional effectiveness is the compass that guides organizations toward excellence, enabling them to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and consistently deliver value to their constituents. In higher education and within this context, innovation is how UCNJ will stay competitive and relevant. Innovation includes Student Services developing specialized cohorts, finding new ways to advise students and to prepare schedules, and to ensure students are getting the classes they need without barriers. Innovation includes Academic Affairs developing new certificate programs and credentialling, revising schedule grids with times that are convenient for the population the College is serving, and using different forms of artificial intelligence or augmented reality to enhance the student experiences. Innovation is using Big Data to devise solutions to enhance student success outcomes (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates) and to identify barriers to success. Innovation includes developing destination venues on each campus for students to explore new or different disciplines or to join like-minded peers to collaborate on a project. Innovation is harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and leveraging AI technologies by transforming academic delivery, streamlining administrative processes, and improving student support services. By embracing AI, UCNJ can stay at the forefront of educational innovation and provide a superior learning experience for students while improving operational efficiency. Innovation is the cornerstone for meeting the needs of the students UCNJ serves and to be prepared for the next big thing in higher education.

Institutional Priority #4 – Equity / Social Justice. Equity assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and a fair or equitable outcome. Equity

recognizes that some groups are disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are underrepresented or marginalized in many institutions. Diversity goes beyond external and internal characteristics and includes characteristics and attributes that are unique. Inclusion means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success. Social justice focuses on power dynamics among different groups of people while acknowledging historical and institutional inequities. It has a vision of a society with equitable distribution of resources, in which all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect (American Library Association, 2023). The College must continue to consider Equity/Social Justice when making decisions, and all systems, programs, must processes must be continually checked to ensure compliance.

Action Plan Titles

The Action Plan table listed on the next pages use the following organizing framework:

- Institutional Priority – Each objective is connected to one or more institutional priority area: Enrollment, Student Success/Excellence, Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness, and Equity/Social Justice.
- Objective – The objective indicates the specific steps to achieve a desired result or goal. The objective defines a specific, measurable action that is connected to one or more institutional priority areas.
- Performance Indicator – Performance indicators are used to evaluate progress towards desired outcomes and to identify areas for improvement.
- Metrics – Metrics are the specific statement of how success will be measured and determined.

Action Plan

	Institutional Priority	Objective	Performance Indicator	Metrics
1.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Increase use of the Innovation Center in the curriculum (course assignment and projects).	Student sign-ins for a specific class. Use of the hardware and software tools in the Innovation Center.	Increase in the frequency of the Innovation Center for course assignments and projects.
2.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Increase the number of stackable and micro-credentials.	Research and embed high value stackable and micro-credentials into the curriculum.	Increase in the number of stackable and micro-credentials in career and technical programs.
3.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Align program curriculum with workplace skills.	Review all Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes using Skillabi and advisory board feedback.	Revise Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes to align with workplace skills based on advisory board feedback and Skillabi data.
4.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Expand innovation and experiential learning opportunities in the curriculum.	Track innovative pedagogy and experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, research projects, and other experiential and collaborative learning engagements across the curriculum.	Increase in the use of innovative pedagogy and experiential learning opportunities in the curriculum. Increase in completion rates for program milestone courses.
5.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Incorporate virtual reality experiences, artificial intelligence, and other advanced technologies (e.g., generative AI) into relevant and appropriate courses.	Track the integration of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other advanced technologies in the relevant and appropriate courses.	Increase in the use of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other advanced technologies in the relevant and appropriate courses. Increase and track completion rates in the selected courses.

	Institutional Priority	Objective	Performance Indicator	Metrics
6.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Enrollment	Research and develop new technical programs and professional trades programs.	Track the implementation of new technical and professional trades programs.	Increase in the number of technical and professional trades programs.
7.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Enrollment	Develop certificate programs in concert with industry needs.	Research and create new certificate programs using advisory board feedback.	Increase in the number of new certificate programs.
8.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Enrollment	Increase online learning opportunities by continuing to develop more programs that are offered fully online.	Track the implementation of programs developed to be offered fully online.	Increase in the number of programs offered fully online.
9.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Enrollment	Revise regular and later start scheduling grids to accommodate non-traditional students.	Implement and track new scheduling grids.	Enrollment in new timeslots.
10.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Design more destination venues on all Union College campuses.	Track usage of destination venues.	Increase in the use of destination venues.
11.	• Equity/Social Justice • Enrollment	Increase issuance of Prior Learning Assessment.	Track issuance of Prior Learning Assessment.	Increase in the number of credits awarded for Prior Learning Assessments.
12.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Enrollment	Improve coordination to ensure students in non-credit English as a Second Language (ESL) move directly into credit ESL.	Track students in ESL.	Increase in number of students moving from non-credit ESL into credit ESL.
13.	• Innovation / Institutional Effectiveness • Student Success/Excellence	Increase number of partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to offer internships and shadowing experiences to all students. Increase number of internships and job shadowing experiences.	Track partnerships and number of internships and job shadowing experiences.	Increase in number of students registered for and completing 290 courses.

	Institutional Priority	Objective	Performance Indicator	Metrics
14.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Evaluate and curate Academic Programs from the lens of high value and low value.	Review all programs and identify high and low value. Research and develop new programs from the lens of high and low value.	Decrease in number of low value programs. Increase in number of high value programs.
15.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Assess high and low value programs with a focus on evaluating their efficacy in facilitating graduates' attainment of gainful employment opportunities offering family-sustaining wages.	Track high and low value programs. Assess number of graduates securing employment positions with salaries meeting or exceeding the local family-sustaining wage standard.	Increase in number of graduates from programs earning a family-sustaining wage.
16.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Increase number of faculty, adjuncts and staff who complete the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Certification.	Continue to run ACUE with a new cohort every fall.	Increase in number of faculty and adjuncts completing ACUE.
17.	• Student Success/Excellence • Equity/Social Justice	Explore Study Abroad opportunities for students – in person or virtual.	Research and implement in person or virtual study abroad opportunities.	Increase in number of students enrolled in study abroad.
18.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Increase upskilling opportunities and advanced professional development for Adjunct Faculty.	Research and implement new upskilling and advanced professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty.	Increase in number of adjunct faculty participating in upskilling and advanced professional development opportunities.
19.	• Enrollment • Equity/Social Justice	Explore alternate schedules: Condensed schedules and 7-week semesters for one year completion.	Implement alternate schedules: condensed schedule / 7-week semesters for one year completion.	Increase in number of students enrolled in alternate schedules. Increase completion rates in condensed schedules and 7-week semesters.
20.	• Student Success/Excellence • Equity/Social Justice	Develop student research projects and publications in each division.	Implement student research projects and publications in each division.	Increase in number of research projects and publications in each division.

	Institutional Priority	Objective	Performance Indicator	Metrics
21.	• Student Success/Excellence • Equity/Social Justice	Increase project-based learning in all disciplines.	Track use of project-based learning in all programs.	Increase in number of instructional strategies using project-based learning.
22.	• Enrollment • Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness	Increase use of predictive data analytics to predict student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates).	Track the use of predictive data analytics to predict student success (i.e., course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates).	Increase in course completion rates, retention rates, and graduation rates.
23.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Develop and implement methods to increase effective and engaging online pedagogy with increased faculty presence.	Track online class activity.	Increase in course completion rates.
24.	• Student Success/Excellence • Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness	Increase authentic assessment within each Academic Division.	Track implementation of authentic assessment within each Academic Division.	Increase in number of authentic assessments used in each Academic Division.
25.	• Student Success/Excellence • Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness	Integrate “essential skills” (aka soft skills) into pedagogy delivery in designated courses.	Develop essential skills (aka soft skills) instructional activities. Implement in designated courses.	Increase in number of essential skills experiential activities in designated courses.
26.	• Student Success/Excellence • Equity/Social Justice	Develop and incorporate Universal Design in all teaching and learning.	Track the development and incorporation of Universal Design in all teaching and learning.	Increase in number of flexible learning environments.
27.	• Student Success/Excellence • Equity/Social Justice	Develop faculty advising workshops about engaging and teaching adult “non-traditional” students.	Develop and implement faculty advising workshops about engaging and teaching adult “non-traditional” students and track progress.	Increase in retention and completion rates for non-traditional students.
28.	• Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness • Equity/Social Justice	Develop pedagogy that focuses on cross-cultural competencies.	Develop and implement instructional content that focuses on cross-cultural competency.	Increase in instructional content that focuses on cross-cultural competency.

	Institutional Priority	Objective	Performance Indicator	Metrics
29.	• Student Success/Excellence • Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness	Develop a data-driven approach utilizing course completion rates to enhance retention rates.	Develop and implement a strategy that utilizes course completion rates to enhance retention rates.	Increase in retention rates.
30.	• Student Success/Excellence • Innovation/Institutional Effectiveness	Develop a system to utilize course completion rates in Learning Outcomes Assessment reporting (i.e., the Closing the Loop form).	Develop and implement a system to utilize course completion rates in Learning Outcomes Assessment reporting.	Increase use of completion rates in Learning Outcomes Assessment reporting.

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