

Fail Proof Pathways to Success STRATEGIC PLAN 2020



A Strategic Agenda for WCCC 2014–2019



Warren
County Community College



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PART I

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

VISUALIZING THE ROAD AHEAD FOR WARREN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (WCCC)

In 2013-2014, Warren County Community College (WCCC) envisioned its 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. To bring energy and focus to this process, two visioning sessions were conducted in Spring 2014 to identify the ideas and priorities of two integral groups of stakeholders – the Warren County Community College Board of Trustees and the College’s employees (faculty and staff).

Each stakeholder group has its own responsibilities and perspectives regarding the College. The Board, representing both the Warren County community and students/alumni, has the fiduciary responsibility to provide policy oversight to the College. Faculty and staff are responsible ensuring that WCCC provides the educational and support services to produce student success. Both groups work in partnership to ensure that WCCC achieves its mission.

The visioning sessions were held during the March 2014 Board of Trustees Retreat and the April 2014 Faculty and Staff In-Service Day. Two external consultants led each session. One facilitated a free-form group discussion using focus questions (shown below), while the other illustrated the trustees’ and employees’ respective responses, opinions, and ideas as they spoke.

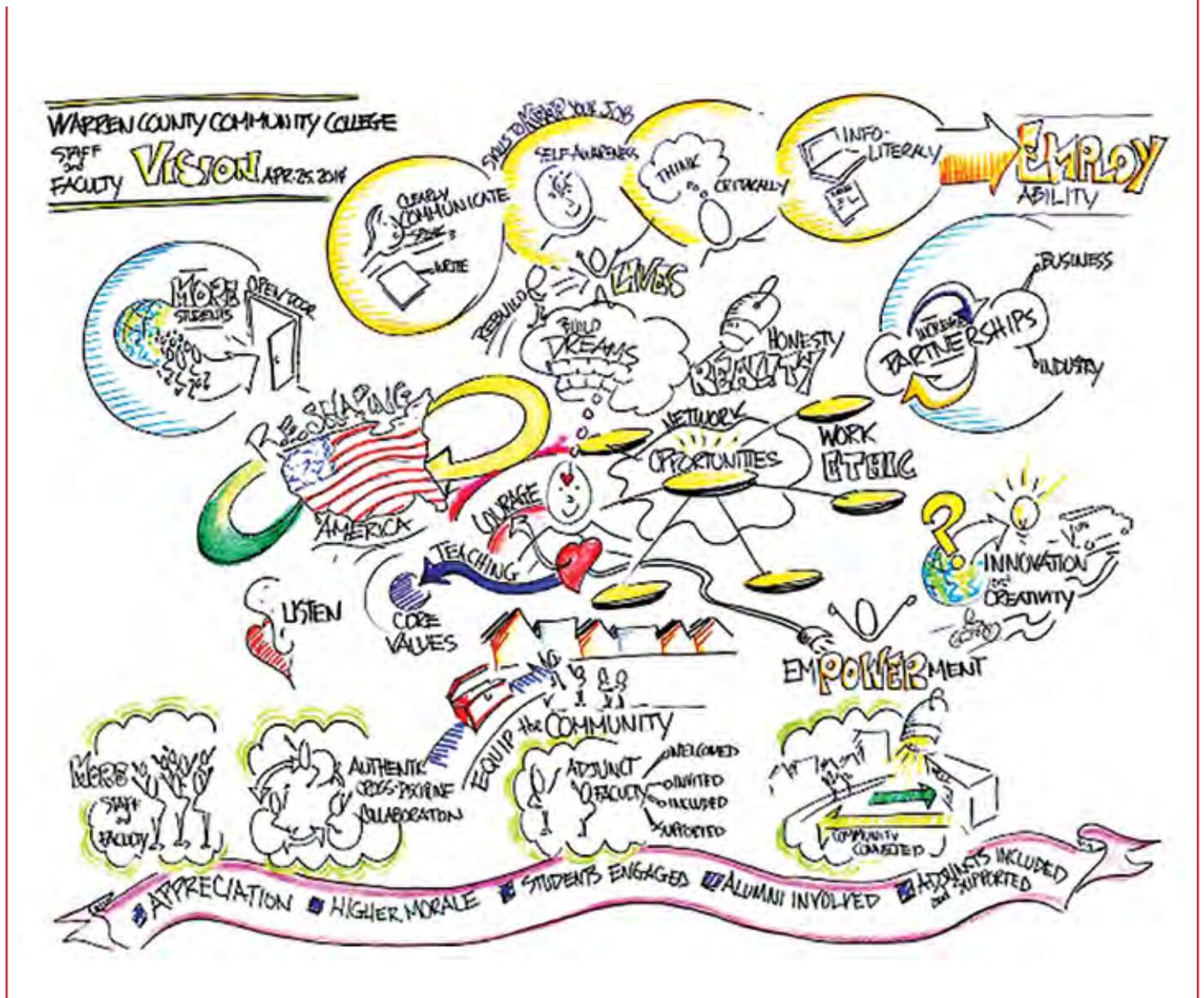
At the culmination of each session, group members had produced an illustrative document that connected their ideas and goals for the College’s future within two cohesive images. These visioning illustrations are displayed on the next two pages.

VISIONING EXERCISE: RETREAT CONSULTANT’S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What overall purpose does the college have and what purpose is it likely to have five years from now?
- 2 What are WCCC’s most important services? (Can you rank them?)
- 3 What will the most important services be in the next five years? (Can you rank them?)
- 4 Who are the most important students, constituents, clients, customers, etc.?
- 5 Why or how are you different from your main competitors?
- 6 How do you think the college will change over the next five years? How do you want it to change?
- 7 How would you judge the college’s ultimate success?
- 8 How do you expect to reach your goals with 65 full-time employees?
- 9 How do we prioritize the vision? Your goals?
- 10 How do we expect to get the resources to implement this vision?

Source: Austin, W. (2009). Strategic Planning for Smart Leadership. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

STAFF & FACULTY VISION – APRIL 25, 2014



The staff and faculty visioning session invited all full-time, part-time and many adjunct employees to participate in the process. Their resulting vision for WCCC centers on the qualities of an excellent educational experience, the resources needed to provide it, and the outcomes that should result from it. According to faculty and staff, an education should provide students with a set of common core values, a sense of perspective and “reality,” and a strong work ethic. If the delivery of that education—be it in the classroom, in a service learning experience, or at any school-sponsored activity or event—is successful, it will effectively empower students and equip them for effective contributions to the community.

In order to deliver a successful education experience for students, staff and faculty need to work collaboratively and inclusively with both full-time and adjunct colleagues, continue professional development activities, and increase partnerships with regional businesses and organizations to provide more innovative educational experiences.



DIFFERING MEANS TO THE SAME END GOALS

The vision of the Board of Trustees and that of the College's employees reflect a desire to create more practical, career centered opportunities for students. Trustees and staff share a desire that students receive excellent education and skills to support future educational and career needs. In this way, WCCC is not only supporting the student, but also ultimately creating a more positive material impact on the Warren County community.

However, each group saw the pathways to these opportunities differently. The Board envisioned the College's role on a macro policy scale, considering community-level advancements the College can undertake to achieve success. The advancement of the College, they felt, needs to be built on mutually-beneficial partnerships with government, businesses, community groups, and local school districts. These could ultimately yield new opportunities, such as additional educational locations, new programs or career based degrees, other mediums for student learning and additional financial and/or fundraising support. A tightly-woven community network would benefit the College and its students in terms of financial stability, academic growth, and long-term success.

The faculty and staff envisioned a means to achieving increased opportunities on a more micro level. They felt that the path ahead of WCCC is in need of a strong foundational education, better everyday collaboration within the campus community and improved internal partnerships and connections. Though the College would make these improvements over the long-term, institutional success would be measured by the staff's day-to-day ability to work with one another and commit to a set of core values necessary to impart before sending students into the workforce beyond WCCC. A set of critical skills and values to instill in students, developed and upheld by a group of mutually-respectful instructors and support staff, is the primary component of this vision.

Fortunately, these two roads to success complement one another and demonstrate that WCCC is focused on one central tenet: the betterment and success of our students and community. Later, in Part IV of this report, it is evident that the goals for this new cycle of strategic planning draw on the large-scale, the day-to-day, the material, and the intellectual components of these complementary visions so that the College is prepared to better equip students before, during, and after they are served at WCCC.

WCCC is focused on the betterment and success of our students and community.

THE PRESIDENT'S VISION – A YEAR OF REVIEW: 2014

Dr. William Austin, completing a decade of service, reacting to the 2014 presidential priorities identified by the WCCC Board of Trustees, reviewing all goals presented by the strategic planning teams, and embracing his role as the 2015 Chair of the American Association of Community College's President's Academy Executive Committee began a year of review at the afternoon session of the March 2014 Trustee Retreat. The Board charged Dr. Austin with addressing WCCC's single greatest challenge: enhancing Pathways to Graduation through a review of developmental education. Board Members, college executives and Dr. Austin embarked on pilot studies, evidenced based analyses, and three well received presentations to the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, The Association of Community College Trustees, and The American Association of Community Colleges entitled: "Predicted to Fail." The results of this year of review, discussion and debate led to the formation of this planning agenda called: "**Fail Proof Pathways to Success,**" to be implemented as the central component of the WCCC Strategic Plan 2020. The initial component pathways consist of the following:

A new alternative to remedial education "**Pathway #1: Lightning Success,**" will be offered by Fall 2015. This initiative, a reduced-tuition 10-week intensive college preparation option, is intended to be an alternative to the current remedial course sequence, which can take as long 18 months. The success in the current remedial course sequence has been only 24% in Math and 26% in English, yielding a related 3-year graduation rate of 7-9% in English and 7-22% in Math. In contrast, 60% of the participants in the pilot program, who were previously identified on the remedial track, were deemed "college ready" with no remediation required upon completion of the 10-week pilot program. This program will occur in partnership with our K-12 districts where high school students will be able to pre-test using the ACCUPLACER assessment, complete the "Lightning" program and possibly test out of remediation from the onset.

WCCC and our K-12 partners will expand our successful high school dual enrollment program (currently over 30% of our total enrollment) that includes each high school served by our community college. The new program, "**Pathway #2: Right Start to Success**" will expand the number of courses credentialed at the high school to include additional courses aligned with our remedial sequence by 2016. Program goals are to achieve 75% of high school graduates predetermined as "college ready" by through multiple approaches including GPA as early as Fall 2017.

For the remaining 20-25% of students desiring it, our approach to traditional remedial education will change by Fall 2016 through a program called "**Pathway #3: Acceleration Success;**" transforming our existing remedial education courses from multi-semester sequences to accelerated versions offered in conjunction, as co-requisites, with degree applicable "college level" classes.

WCCC will further decrease time to completion through the expansion of our nationally recognized veteran credentialing program called Veterans in Pursuit of Educational Readiness (VIPER) through "**Pathway #4: VIPER Success.**" VIPER credentials military experience up to 45 credits toward an Associates' Degree (some veterans graduate with a transferable Associate's degree in a single semester). VIPER exempts all participants (veterans and active duty military personnel) from remedial requirements. This program currently requires several on-campus courses but will be implemented as a fully online degree by no later than 2016.

WCCC's final approach to improved completion is called "**Pathway #5: Process Success.**" This initiative calls for the administrative review of courses where either a) each course in the graduation sequence that has a repeat ratio of 20% or higher (that is, 20% of students who graduate have repeated it at least once) or b) where over 20% of the students fail to complete the course in a given year. This review may result in actions/changes such as external verification of the curriculum, restructuring of courses and/or additional professional development for instructors.



PART II

PREFACE

Warren County Community College (WCCC) is an institution of higher education located in Warren County, New Jersey, a relatively rural exurb of Northwest New Jersey. Founded in 1981, the College has been offering degree programs for more than 25 years and continues to offer county residents an opportunity to take part in educational growth at an accredited, continuously-evolving institution.

WCCC values its students as its primary priority, aiming to meet individual students' learning goals while helping the student body as a whole to seek and obtain new career opportunities. Both students and educators at the College are consistently seeking to develop community relationships in order to facilitate continued educational opportunities and new local career paths.

These aims are supported by the College's published values:

COLLABORATION

COMMITMENT

DIVERSITY

INNOVATION

INTEGRITY

LEARNING

QUALITY

The implementation of this strategic plan will ensure that the goals of our students continue to be put first so that students are satisfied and well-prepared for their future personal, academic, and professional opportunities. The plan itself reviews and improves upon prior goals and past assessments related to academics, personnel, engagement, partnership, diversity, retention, and budgeting.

Collaborative endeavors from faculty, staff, administrators, stakeholders, and the community will reinforce the goals put forth in this document and further WCCC's ability to address each student's individual aspirations and the local community's long term needs.

REFLECTING ON THE MISSION AND VISION

WCCC works to fulfill the following mission statement:

Warren County Community College maintains a mission of building a community of learners through accessible and quality learning opportunities designed to meet educational goals and aspirations.

The College's Vision Statement reflects an institution whose role is to:

Provide lifelong learning opportunities that will enhance individuals' success, strengthen commitment to the community, and reflect innovation and change.

As part of this Vision, the College's 2015-2020 Motto is:

FROM EDUCATION TO WORK: FOR WARREN COUNTY & SOCIETY

THE ROAD AHEAD

This new strategic plan focuses on enhancing each student's experience at WCCC and improving academic engagement. This, in turn, will promote student success, graduation and career realization. When the goals of successful academic engagement in this strategic plan are implemented, WCCC will improve its ability to retain students and expand upon its already-successful academic programs. More graduates with greater success should encourage the Board of Trustees (and our funding partners) to invest in new initiatives and projects based on the positive growth surrounding the institution.

Emphasis over the next five years will focus on increasing both access and student success. The Board is committed to redirecting resources toward the realization of a series of pathways for entering students to ensure that the end result is the successful realization of a degree or certificate that can be used for transfer or direct entry into employment.

This renewed commitment to student graduation will help to foster a positive reputation of the College in the community. This community perception should ultimately influence more students to consider Warren County Community College as one of their first choices when deciding upon a college to attend.



PART III

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

FACTORS OF SUCCESS

A variety of demographic characteristics have an impact on WCCC and its surrounding service area. The socioeconomic position of the county residents influences the kinds of students WCCC ultimately enrolls, as well as the kinds of academic and cultural services provided to them for success.

An understanding of these factors presents opportunities to leverage internal strengths and to gain perspective on external threats to the success of WCCC's initiatives and planning. The College's mission has been shaped by these contextual factors, which have led to sensitivity toward the area's needs at a given time as well as confirmation of the importance of being an active participant in efforts to expand the regional workforce.

Census data reveal information about Warren County that helps to explain the College's growth assumptions in this plan. With a stable population of approximately 107,000 and a residential spread of about 295 persons per square mile, Warren County is more rural and significantly less densely populated than most of New Jersey. To the east of Warren County lies the New York metropolitan area, which houses a number of larger New Jersey community colleges and some of the wealthiest major metropolitan bedroom communities of the region. The contrasts between Warren County and bordering regions suggest that the College sees significant competition in recruiting students as well as administrative and instructional personnel.

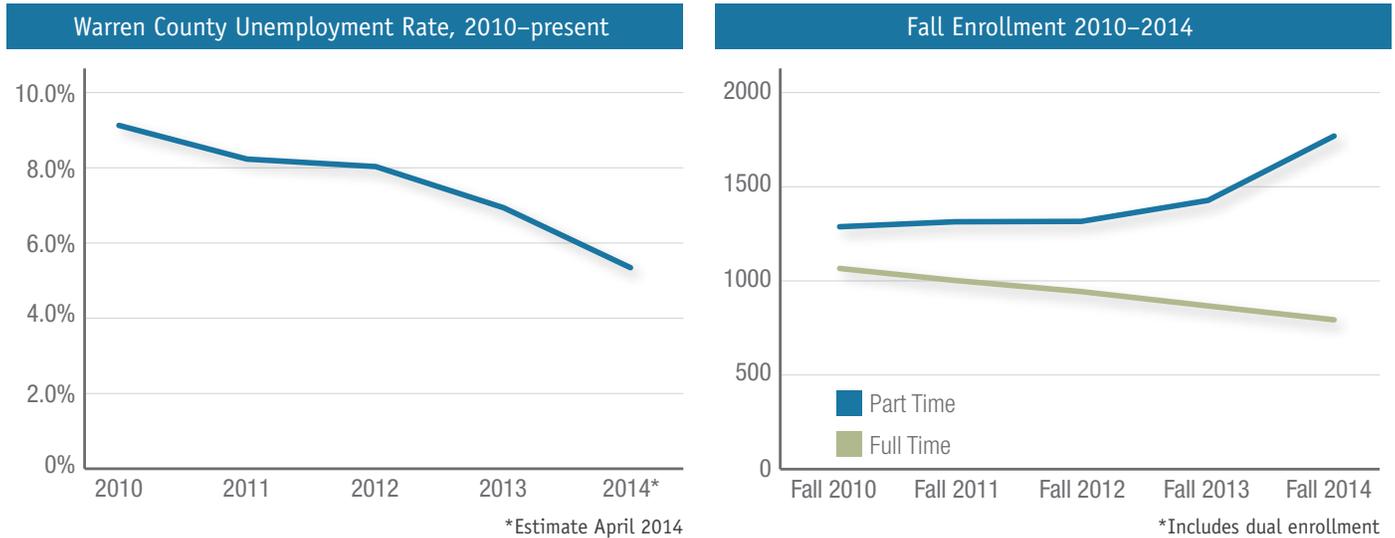
The county's unique geographic position is not the only influential factor that affects the College. The social and economic characteristics of its rural-exurban residents are impactful as well. According to the 2010 Census, the median household income in the county (for those employed) was \$73,056. This is a decidedly middle-class income for our area of the country, and in Warren County, it is earned primarily through "blue-collar" work and employment in educational and social services (Source: US Census Community Facts).

The national economic recession of the late 2000s, coupled with the prevalence of blue-collar employment in the county, meant that the unemployment rate significantly increased in the Warren County region. This increase in the unemployment rate was evident in the unusual enrollment growth at WCCC. Managing this time of rapid growth and rapid enrollment correction both in terms of personnel and finances has strained the College's ability to renew and recreate itself over the last several years. Advancements have continued, but not at the rate originally planned for in the previous strategic planning cycle.

The College's enrollment experienced a significant spike from 2009-2012 as residents turned to the College for programs and services in the wake of the national economic downturn. Realizing that enrollment growth was temporary, the Board and Administration relied on current and temporary (e.g. adjunct) employees during this period rather than increasing the full-time complement to support a temporary enrollment growth. This put WCCC in a stronger financial position to address fluctuations in enrollment change, but taxed the already limited employee complement of staff to do much more with less.



According to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the last five years have seen the county's unemployment rate drop (from 9.2% in 2010 to 5.4% in April 2014) as the nation recovers economically. Correspondingly, WCCC has seen a gradual (and expected) decrease in enrollment since 2011 as the student cohorts that started during the recession have moved beyond the College.



The size and median income of our service area is projected to remain stagnant, due to the Highlands Act. The Highlands Act was enacted by NJ in 2004 to limit growth in the northern part of the state in order to preserve the state's aquifers. This Act, coming just before the economic slowdown, has definitely limited the future growth of the region. The changing nature of the county's workforce and increased employment of county residents also suggests that the College will have to adapt to changing needs with regard to educational programs in order to maintain steady enrollment numbers, and appropriate services for our residents.

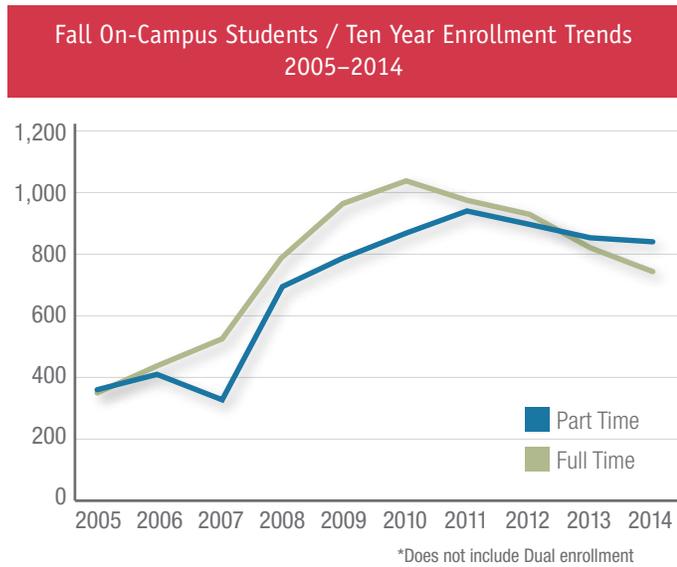
Public sentiment suggests that it will be important for WCCC to provide more professional educational opportunities for employed students and academic programs geared more toward immediate entry into the workforce for those just starting out. Our local elected officials have stressed the need for WCCC to only expand in career oriented programming as this represents the greatest need for our service area. For example, this goal was formally articulated as a goal for the Board by the current Freeholder Director (and a former WCCC Board Chair) at the May 2014 Board of Trustees meeting.

According to the 2012 American Community Survey, 62% of county residents' highest educational attainment is less than an associate's degree level. This indicates a need for planned and continued managed growth at the College once the period of post-recessionary enrollment correction has concluded.

The College is positioned to add general value to the community in addition to responding to the need for professional development and vocationally-oriented programs. Offering residents the opportunity to increase their educational attainment means offering them a chance to increase lifetime earnings, quality of life, and improve the economic stability of the region.

STUDENT POPULATION & GRADUATION

WCCC’s students come to the College with varied long-term goals. Traditional-aged students are more likely to attend on a full-time basis. The chart below indicates the trend in the breakdown between full and part-time students matriculated over the past several years.



Full-time students primarily seek to complete some or all of their two year education before transferring to a four-year college. Other students start at Warren with different educational goals. They may be looking for courses or skills to assist in a career or may be seeking a degree over a longer period of time. They may need to fit education within other priorities, such as a job or family commitments. Some students come to WCCC with the intention of never graduating, but to hone specific skills or obtain a specific educational goal.

Recent data appears to indicate that WCCC is doing well at supporting the full-time student cohort on the path to transfer and/or graduation. However, closer examination of those students whose pathway begins in remedial education suggests that immediate and radical change will be required to ensure those students also reach their educational goals at the same rate as students who enter WCCC “college ready.” While WCCC’s graduation rate has remained one of the highest in the NJ Community College sector, success has varied significantly based on the level of remedial preparedness. Also, the most recent data suggest a downturn in graduation rates is likely if dramatic action is not taken.

As shown below, the Fall 2008 cohort of first-time, full-time students experienced a 33% graduation rate (within 4 years). However, this rate declined with the Fall 2010 cohort.

	Graduation Rates by Year of Entry		
	100%	150%	200%
2008	23%	25%	33%
2009	21%	26%	30%
2010	18%	20%	24%
2011	18%	25%	n/a
2012	12%	n/a	n/a

Source: WCCC Dept. of Institutional Research 2014

Comparatively speaking, this is one of the highest rates among community colleges in New Jersey and favorably comparable to the graduate rates of other two-year colleges in the country. However, the College could still be at risk despite a solid graduation rate. Pending New Jersey state legislation which could soon become law would require community colleges to maintain a 33% graduation rate to be eligible for performance-based funding. Although stable on the face of it, the limited graduation rates of remedial students necessitate the ethical requirement for the College to radically improve the graduation and persistence rates of those students whose path begins at the pre-college level.

Warren County Community College has almost achieved the minimum graduation requirement—but by better understanding the reasons students do not persist, and by making modifications based on these data, WCCC can aim to comfortably exceed any state-mandated performance goals, the national Community College Completion Agenda, and the expectations of the Board of Trustees.



For those students' whose plans do not immediately include graduation or transfer—a common path for many community college students; the College's fall-to-fall retention rate provides an idea of how successful the institution is at keeping the student population in the classroom and on track. It also gives decision-makers an idea of how successfully the College satisfies and engages those who enroll with us. The 2013 IPEDS Survey reports a 61% fall-to-fall retention rate for full-time students—slightly below the prior year of 63%. This is one of the higher rates in the NJ community college sector.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Keeping students engaged and satisfied is a key to keeping them on track for completion, transfer, and educational goal attainment. In order to gain information regarding students' perceptions of WCCC and their overall satisfaction levels with the College, the institution periodically administers the Noel-Levitz Institutional Student Satisfaction Survey and/or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Noel Levitz administration last took place in 2011 and is scheduled to be implemented again in Spring 2015. CCSSE was last administered in 2012.

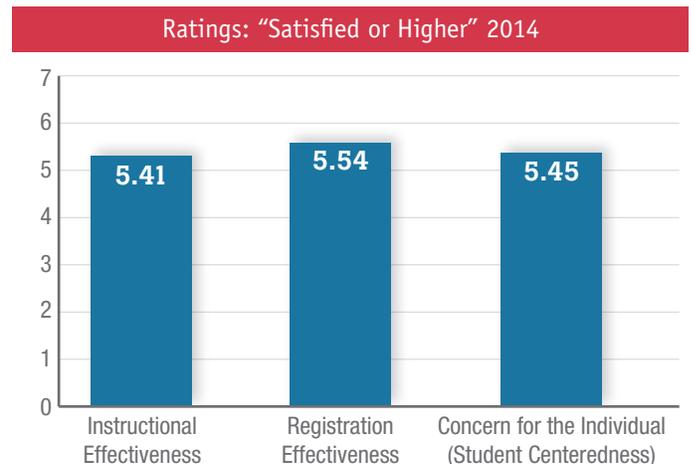
Institutions across the country use these professionally-designed surveys to assess the characteristics and opinions of their student bodies. From a positive standpoint, our survey results suggested that WCCC is committed to helping students reach their goals. The College ensures students are provided with advisors who advocate for their success and maintain an academic support system for them, and WCCC is perceived as committed to non-traditional and underrepresented members of the student population.

The Noel-Levitz SSI asks students to rank categorized experiences on a scale from 1 (Not Satisfied) to 7 (Very Satisfied). In terms of "overall" satisfaction, students ranked WCCC an average of 5.20 (between Somewhat Satisfied and Satisfied, under the national average of 5.83). More alarming was that when asked if they would enroll here again about 74% could not answer with a definitive yes.

However, for part-time students, who are more likely to "stop out" for periods of time and take less traditional educational paths, the one-year retention rate is 33%. This figure is one of lowest among community colleges in New Jersey. The persistence rates for developmental students are far less than those of the total student body. This plan will need to address both the part-time and remedial cohorts and devise and implement strategies to increase their persistence and graduation.

However, there were some areas where the college ranked satisfied or higher as shown in the chart below. Students in particular thought the college did well in concern for the individual, registration effectiveness and instructional effectiveness.

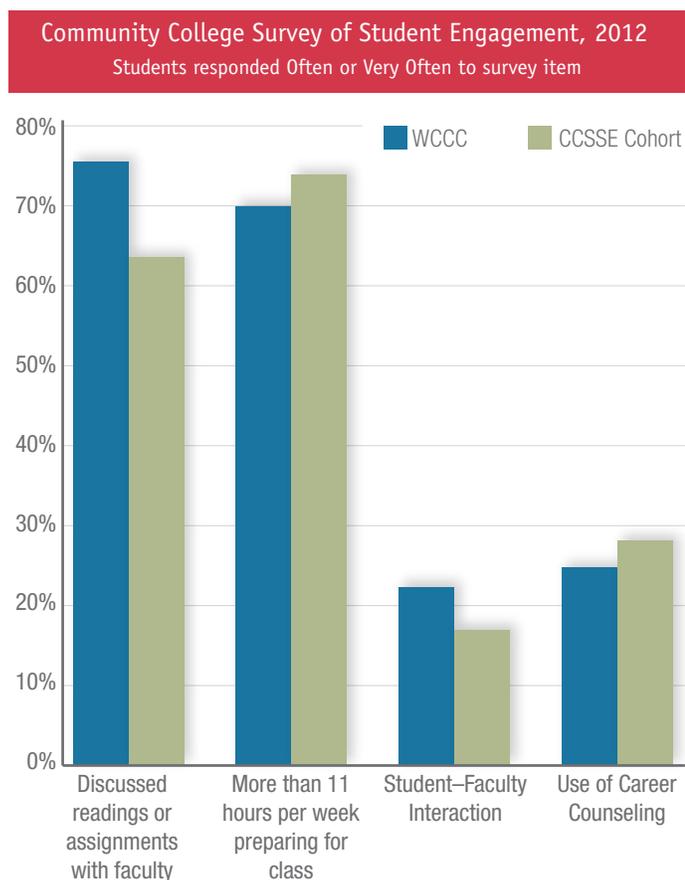
Students also indicated that some courses required of their degree programs were not as practical as they require. Students might like the option to participate in internships and other experiential or service-based learning opportunities. At the March 2014 Board Retreat, Trustees reemphasized this student concern, and strongly suggested that this be an important issue to be addressed in the 2014-2017 Presidential Priorities. It is important that the faculty and staff become more aware of these student and community desires by demonstrating greater concern for the individual.



Source: 2014-15 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the Noel-Levitz survey detailed above, the College regularly administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). This instrument measures student engagement on campus. Survey results found that students are actively participating in class while here at the College but not necessarily putting in extra hours of study time, working with classmates, or reaching out to professors outside of regular class time.



Source: 2012 CCSSE, WCCC Office of Institutional Research

This finding is likely the result of time constraints facing our largely working students coupled with average hours of full-time professors on campus [Fall 2014 statistics suggest average number days on campus: 3.5, average hours per week on campus: 17.7] and even less time on campus among adjuncts. Just over half (53%) of WCCCs students attend on a part-time basis. When not in college, most are working or attending to personal/family needs. These students often inform that they have limited time to schedule classes, let alone academic support services. This factor suggests the College needs to schedule services at times outside of normal class hours and enhance the academic support services offered to students, such as peer tutoring sessions and skill labs.

The administration and Board have taken these results seriously, transitioning some of the teaching responsibilities to a hybrid lecturer/administrative position (commonly known as the “College Lecturer,”) that is required to work year-round, teaching additional sections, increasing office hours and engaging more frequently with the student population. These individuals instruct multiple sections and work office hours in student services and the instructional support center.

In addition to a finding lower student engagement in out-of-class individual academic work, WCCC students also reported below average student engagement in College-sponsored academic and other support services. Based on this data, WCCC will work to increase student engagement outside of class, particularly in ways that will lead students to take better advantage of the support services, academic and otherwise, that are available to them.

Apart from the CCSSE survey, the latest Noel-Levitz SSI showed a significant level of dissatisfaction with the availability of internship programs and experiential learning opportunities. Increasing these practical academic offerings so that students have a built-in chance to reinforce classroom knowledge is a way for the College to combat low levels of out-of-class engagement. Expanding these opportunities will demand a strong commitment from faculty and staff to work effectively with the local community to develop additional student placements.

There are, however, elements of student engagement that WCCC can be proud of: according to the most recent CCSSE, students were highly engaged not just in class participation but in experiencing a wide variety of instructional methods. In addition, they ranked instructors and staff as “friendly” and “supportive” (a 5.4, with 7 being the maximum level of support). The College should leverage these strengths to work on further engaging students outside of their class hours.



DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

WCCC recognizes that successful developmental education programs are often essential to the success of community college students. This issue was the focus of the Board's 2014 Retreat, its Presidential Priority Assessment, as well as the recent heralded pilot study on alternatives to developmental education. At a recent ACCT presentation called, "Predicted to Fail: What if our Placement Strategy is Wrong?" the WCCC Board of Trustees demanded changes and actions to radically address the current lack of progress and success in remedial education at WCCC and across our nation. Developmental courses in math and English are often the difference between a student's success at WCCC and the failure to graduate or even continue into the next semester. The vast majority of entering students are not exempt from the ACCUPLACER placement test. As a result of testing, over 60% of students are subsequently placed into at least one remedial course.

More WCCC data demonstrate that students who place out of development courses and can enroll immediately in college-level English and math sections are better retained and have higher graduation rates. Recent research further suggests that students who place into developmental courses, but elect not to enroll in them, rather enrolling directly into "College Level" courses are more likely to succeed.

WCCC offers academic support services to students in developmental courses in need of the extra assistance. These services included tutoring through the Instructional Support Center, placement test prep sessions, and always-available academic advisors ready to assist students with setting goals. These are all important services, but as mentioned in the discussion of student engagement, are not always utilized by students and not always the most effective strategy. WCCC needs to develop better strategies for supporting students in these courses to see greater outcomes.

Warren Remedial Sequence: Outcomes of the 2010 Cohort over 6 semesters

% of students who...	READING	WRITING	ARITHMETIC	ALGEBRA	ALGEBRA
	ENG 042 Critical Reading	ENG 041 Basic Writing	MAT 050 Basic Math	MAT 051 Introductory Algebra	MAT 052 Intermediate Algebra
score into this course	29%	23%	28%	18%	11%
enroll 1 year later	49%	56%	55%	62%	65%
graduate in 2 years	0%	2%	0%	7%	12%
graduate in 3 years	4%	5%	3%	12%	21%
graduate in 4 years	7%	9%	7%	15%	22%

WCCC's 2013 Periodic Review Report and the Board's Presidential Priorities identified the improvement of remedial education as the key institutional priority. With so many students enrolled in these classes, student progression into college-level courses is a significant factor in the College's overall retention, graduation, and course completion rates.

The data demonstrate that students who place into developmental courses struggle to graduate. It further demonstrates the difficulty that students placing into these courses have in progressing beyond them into college-level English and math courses, or finishing remedial coursework at all. The course completion rates for all five remedial courses are lower than those for college-level math and English courses – as well as courses in nearly all disciplines at WCCC.

English and Math Sequence–Course Pass Rates with D or Higher				
	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
ENG 041	64%	60%	66%	68%
ENG 042	61%	57%	70%	67%
ENG 140	83%	85%	89%	84%
ENG 141	70%	75%	71%	69%
MAT 050	70%	62%	75%	72%
MAT 051	57%	56%	62%	56%
MAT 052	64%	63%	74%	79%
MAT 110	76%	83%	94%	88%

Source: WCCC Department of Institutional Research, Fall 2014

There are too many WCCC students who not only place into remedial courses, but find themselves repeating these classes, further delaying progress toward their degree. In addition, recent federal changes in student progress guidelines now put students who are not successfully completing remedial courses in jeopardy of losing financial aid eligibility and never graduating. Clearly, successful completion in remedial classes has to become a key student financial priority.

Further, with the recent statewide emphasis on performance-based funding, the ability to successfully support students who place into developmental courses so that they may transition through the remaining college-level requirements of degree and transfer programs will be crucial to the institution’s financial well-being. Overall, the most essential strategy will be to find alternative pathways to college readiness, otherwise students risk not having enough financial aid to complete the Bachelor’s Degree or worse, taking out substantial levels of student loans to reach academic goals that may fail to provide a financial return on investment (ROI) for students.

WCCC has had years of “tinkered” experimentation attempts to address these issues, unfortunately, the time not taken to assess these experiments have often led to the renewal and perpetuation of unsuccessful strategies. The risk level for students, the outcome success of the College, as well as the lack of success of past initiatives demands action for immediate changes and assessments.

Moving forward, WCCC must assess the needs of students in developmental programs to help them set goals and develop pathways to achieve success. In addition, a thorough review of the developmental education program through the “Fail Proof Pathways to Success” initiative will shed light on the areas in which we can innovate, change, and radically improve the ways in which the College delivers remedial education. WCCC’s recent pilot program moved students from pre-testing into remediation to “College Ready” with a 60+% success rate in just 10-weeks. Although this program will not be effective for all students, it does suggest the need for a paradigm shift in the approach to developmental education over the current minor modification strategy within the context of the existing paradigm. WCCC has reached the point where a “Kuhnian” paradigm revolution is warranted and necessitated.



WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of WCCC's greatest strengths is its consistent contribution to local workforce development. According to the 2012 Institutional Profile, the school provided \$1.6 million in corporate and continuing education to different employers in its service area. In addition, the College's 2012 Enrollment Report shows 881 employees from 61 local businesses taking advantage of corporate training opportunities offered by the College.

Beyond training opportunities for local businesses, workforce development is happening in classrooms. Current students aspiring to enter the workforce are being given thousands of hours of practical training each year to be ready for immediate entrance into the workforce upon program completion. WCCC provided 37,174 hours in of training in 2013 for students enrolled in business and healthcare-track programs. These career-oriented programs are performing well for students: the completion rates for WCCC's Medical Assisting, Certified Nursing Assisting, Dental Assisting, and Pharmacy Technician programs have all exceeded 85% over the last three years.

FY13 Noncredit Healthcare Career Programs	Medical Assisting	Certified Nursing Assistant	Dental Assisting
Students	26	37	6
Completions	21	35	6
Completion Rate	81%	95%	100%
Training Related Job Placements*	18	33	5
Placement Rate	86%	94%	83%
Hourly Wage*	\$14.02	\$12.03	\$13.50

Source: WCCC Department of Institutional Research, Fall 2014

Partnerships with local businesses and community organizations, as outlined in the Board's visioning document (as well as that of the staff and faculty), should be prioritized going forward to create more workforce development opportunities for students and community residents. Partnerships could lead to networking, internship, and career counseling opportunities for students about to enter the workforce, and increased enrollment and program offerings in the area of corporate training and vocational programs.

HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING

Upon emerging from years of enrollment fluctuation related to the economic recession, WCCC remains in a relatively stable financial position. Trustees and the administration diligently worked to ensure a planning design dedicated to fiscal stability. To ensure long-term fiscal responsibility, the College did not expand its human resource base during the period of dramatic but temporary enrollment growth.

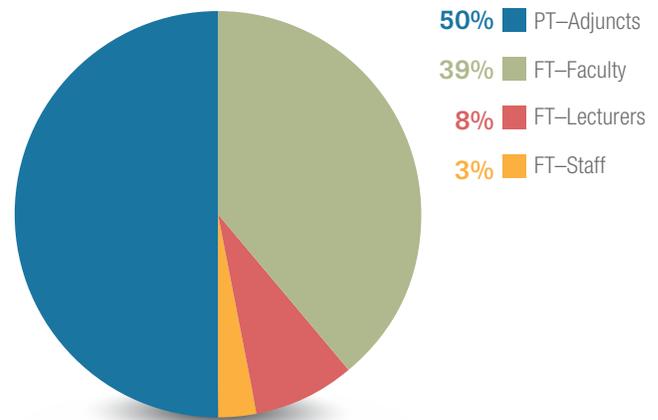
WCCC maintains an appropriate contingent of full-time instructional staff and has been innovative in restructuring and reorganizing to better balance workloads across campus. In addition, the College has moved toward hiring 12-month, five day per week administrative lecturers to ensure the greatest return on investment in hiring teaching professionals for the future. The College will assess whether this change in hiring improves productivity, student engagement, and student graduation rates as part of its assessment strategy.

WCCC employs significantly more adjuncts than full-time faculty (WCCC 2013 Institutional Profile). The faculty and staff visioning exercise noted that there is a desire for adjuncts—a large and important component of our staff base—to be more included in the academic and cultural community of the College.

A renewed and more rigorous focus on professional development opportunities is needed to ensure that instructors are up-to-date regarding new instructional technologies and innovative pedagogical approaches. As the importance of the adjunct faculty rises, adding administrative teaching staff to ensure mentoring, professional development, and professional growth will be essential to student success.

The shift in the current organizational structure toward the full-time teaching lecturer model may allow WCCC to effectively bridge the gap between adjuncts and traditional full-time instructors. In this format, the College can elect to bring the most experienced instructors to the staff on a twelve-month basis. Full-time lecturers serve as a great resource to traditional faculty and staff as they complete program reviews, outcomes assessments, and academic initiatives outside of the classroom.

Courses Taught by Instructor Type



Though the College is in a relatively strong financial position, the rising cost of personnel related expenses, including employee health insurance, will cause the College to devote additional resources to fringe benefits. These costs will become a factor in considering the future size and complement of the College's workforce.

The College will continue to face personnel challenges resulting from WCCC's size, location, and its nature as a public institution. The distance from more populated regions, the housing costs in the region, state laws limiting out of state hiring, and budgetary constraints make staff recruitment a more difficult and time-consuming process than it might be at other institutions. WCCC's employees have repeatedly demonstrated that they are flexible and adaptable to change by supporting new programs, activities and directions. Moving forward, faculty and staff will need to remain open to new ideas and approaches in order to address the College's strategic priorities.



FACILITY PLANNING

Over the last five years, WCCC has significantly expanded and improved its physical presence. In Fiscal Year 2012, the College completed the full renovation and expansion of its library and opened the Phillipsburg Education Center, a satellite location and central hub for Continuing Education.

Expansions and updates to our facilities have increased the College's physical space by 153% between 2008 and 2013 (2013 PRR Report). The College is committed to embracing other kinds of facility changes that should make significant impacts on the fulfillment of the mission.

In large part, due to the state bond funds issued in 2013, WCCC has been able to implement significant technological upgrades in the classroom, for distance learning courses, and for a new Enterprise Resource Planning system ("mainframe computer software"). Science and Technology lab upgrades are intended to mirror the technology available in industry and at larger research institutions where WCCC graduates are most likely to work and transfer to in the future.

Facility planning is focused on meeting student and educational needs, with obvious attention to access and security. As this strategic plan looks toward the future of WCCC, it acknowledges that while great improvements to the facilities in the last few years have taken place, there are significant challenges going forward. One such challenge is the fact that WCCC is a small institution compared to its counterparts in the state. The size of its Washington Campus currently is dictated by limitations in the local wastewater management system. Additional facilities cannot be constructed without an expansion of the county's local sewer station.

Being small and operating with a limited budget means that any initiatives for future facility growth and management must be well-researched and planned. In addition, the value of any initiatives must be proven to College administrators as well as to the Board of Trustees. The implementation of a more systematic method of proposing and analyzing future purchases, repairs, and construction projects will benefit WCCC in attempts to conserve costs.

As a means of being fiscally conservative, the College is planning to ultimately partner with Hackettstown Regional Medical Center (HRMC) to expand its student reach and improve its healthcare education programs. HRMC is in the process of being sold in 2014-5, meaning that discussions regarding the expansion to a third WCCC educational center are on hold until the sale is completed and new owners can begin to consider their educational partnership needs.

Currently, the College is in the process of procuring the land adjacent to the College on the Route 57 corridor that will fully connect the property of the Warren County Technical School and WCCC further enhancing its cooperation and partnership opportunities. The WCCC Foundation is charged with developing this property for student use in health and wellness initiatives.

The Board's vision illustration indicated that those charged with making important decisions about the College's physical growth have ideas about partnering with businesses and industry throughout the county. WCCC will continue to leverage these partnerships to maintain financially-beneficial relationships with businesses and k-12 districts to provide post-secondary services (education and training) to the region.

Facility emphasis for the duration of this plan will center on two distinct areas identified in the Facilities Master Plan. The first area is the development of external facilities at Washington, such as co-curricular outdoor spaces. The second emphasis will be to pursue a partnership with a local healthcare provider to provide expanded health education services to the county.

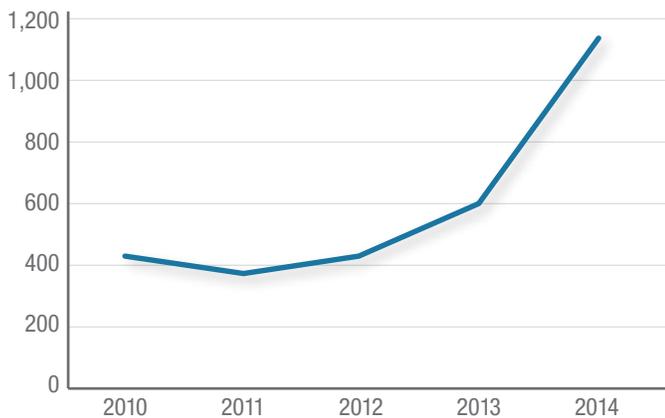


Proposed health education center rendering

ENROLLMENT PLANNING

At the start of the last strategic plan, the College was focusing on how to meet increased enrollment demands (largely caused by the economic downturn) with limited facilities. As enrollment is now stabilizing after correcting from the temporary, unplanned recession based increases, the college now faces different challenges related to enrollment and program planning. Factors that will affect our enrollment during the term of this plan will be both external (high school demographics and the economy) and internal (strategic marketing efforts and the prioritization of resources).

Fall Enrollment 2010–2014 Off-Campus (Dual Enrollment)



The College has grown physically over the past 10 years with an emphasis on expansion for instructional and student learning needs. WCCC’s physical footprint is modest compared with other regional and NJ community colleges. Nevertheless, the College has shown that it is able to maximize student learning space even during periods of extraordinary short-term enrollment growth (i.e., during 2009-10, when enrollment jumped 19% due to the recession). During that period, WCCC was able to use the additional revenues generated from a temporary enrollment jump to support the physical expansion of the College. The challenge going forward will be to match programs and services to the needs of the community during a period when enrollment is stable or slightly declining due to regional demographic patterns.

One way to better serve the community is to reach beyond the traditional brick and mortar higher education boundaries by expanding services to K-12 students. WCCC has done this through its dual enrollment partnerships with local high schools. WCCC has significantly expanded its dual enrollment population over the past two years as a result of a strategic initiative to partner more closely with the county’s high schools. This expansion has increased total headcount enrollment and provided a highly valuable contribution to our constituent families whether those students choose to permanently enroll at WCCC or elsewhere.

These two changes signal that the kind of educational product needed by the community is changing –due to both efforts to recruit different kinds of students, and the types of students currently choosing WCCC. Data also reveal opportunities to maintain current enrollment and illustrate the subpopulations the College is not effectively serving.

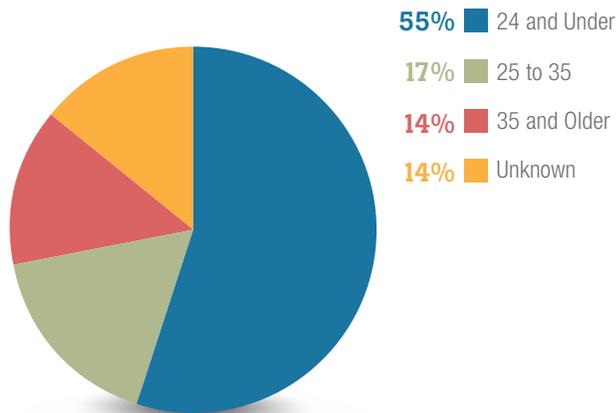
One opportunity revealed is the chance to capitalize on growing relationships with local high schools. WCCC is developing better connections with high school guidance counselors, students, and parents through the growing dual enrollment program. Between 2009 and 2014, WCCC’s high school capture rate has remained stable.

High School Capture Rates	
2009	21%
2012	19%
2014	20%

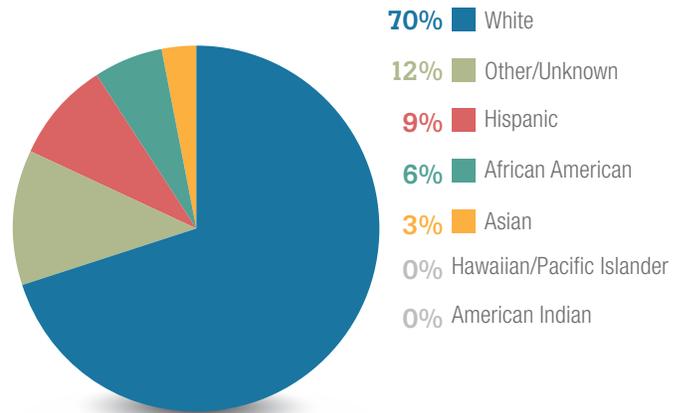


The College serves an age diverse student base, with 58% of its on-campus students over the age of 21. In terms of race/ethnicity, the College's ethnic and racial breakdown is reflective of the county demographics.

Enrollment by Age Fall 2014



Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity Fall 2014



Significant Issue

A fundamental challenge to WCCC's future enrollment planning is the regional growth restrictions that have been implemented over the past decade. The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, a 2004 New Jersey law aimed at protecting the Highlands region of northwest New Jersey by regulating development within the region under the supervision of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, has essentially curtailed growth in the region.

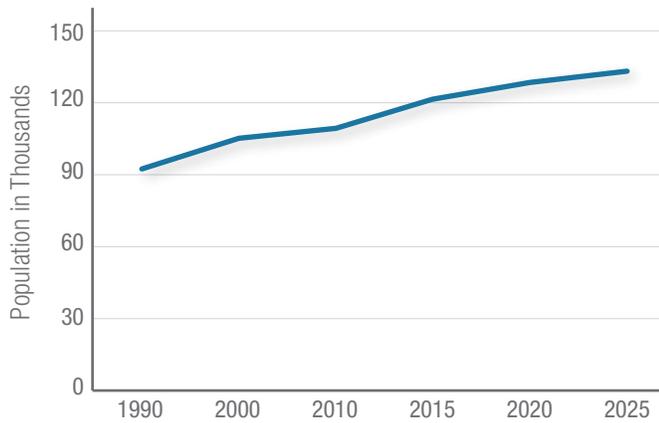
This law is the most significant piece of state land use legislation since the State Planning Act of 1985, and is among the most significant environmental bills ever passed by the State of New Jersey. The stated purpose of the law was to advance conservation efforts, smart growth, regional planning, and water resource protections in the region.

Highlands Impact

The actual impact of the law for residents and students of Warren County was to diminish growth, seriously hamper economic development, and limit future employment and advanced education available to the next generation of Warren County residents. To the College, it translates into lower enrollment potential, lower revenue streams, and severely limited funding for capital expansion. To date, the State of New Jersey has not compensated Warren County, its residents, or the "College" for what is viewed by many locally as no more than a "land grab." Adding to this problem, after promising all community colleges a share of funding from the last statewide Higher Education Bond; the funds earmarked for Warren County were diverted to other resource rich counties.

The Highlands legislation has effectively curtailed future growth for WCCC. The College has known and planned appropriately for the fact that full-time enrollment would drop because Warren County high schools are graduating fewer students as the children of the baby boomers are now out of school and there is diminished migration into the county. What becomes more imperative given the limits placed on expansion, economic development, business expansion, and educational facility support is that WCCC becomes one of the sole means of upward mobility available to the residents of Warren County, making the College's mission more essential than ever.

Warren County Actual and Projected Population, 1990–2025



First to Second Year Retention Rates of First Time, Full Time, Degree Seeking Students, Fall 2009–Fall 2014



NOTE: Retention rate cohort includes all full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students. Entering class includes all students coming to the institution for the first time.
Source: IPEDS 2014 Survey

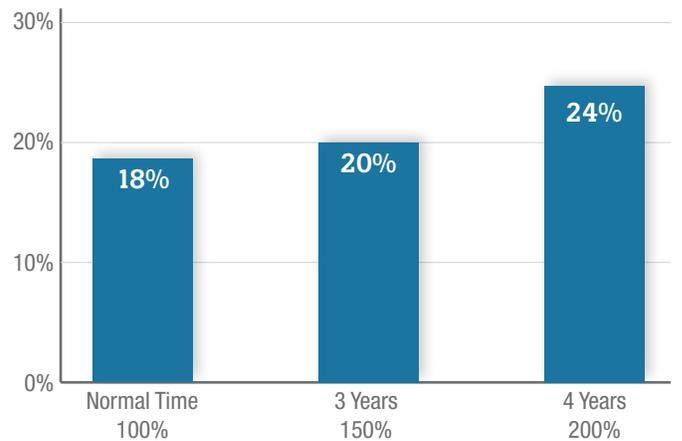
In addition to recruiting new students, another way for an institution of higher education to sustain itself is to retain (and ultimately) graduate students. The College’s retention rate for full-time students, while very good in comparison to national norms and statewide reported numbers, has not increased over the past several years.

To improve these figures and ultimately answer the degree Completion Agenda challenge currently facing community colleges, WCCC will need to embark new retention strategies, particularly for career-based students.

WCCC’s full-time graduation rate has consistently been among the highest in the NJ Community College sector. However, this rate has dropped over the past two years, which is of concern. The three-year graduation rate for the Fall 2010 cohort was 20%, down from the Fall of 2009 cohort rate of 26%.

It also should be noted that many students take longer to graduate. In the annual graduation survey, nearly 40% report that they required over 3.5 years to graduate. With state and federal governments pushing for higher graduation rates, success in this area will remain a priority for the College.

Graduation Rates of Full Time, First Time Degree Seeking Undergraduates within 100%, 150% and 200% of normal time to completion–2010 Cohort





DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education has become a popular option for students. In Fall 2014, 33 of the 265 course sections (12.4%) were delivered exclusively on-line. Until recently, students had been limited to taking up to 50% of courses on-line due to accreditation requirements. However, in September 2014, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education approved WCCC to offer two associate's degrees, Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice, as on-line programs.

There are challenges to the goals of offering more academic courses on-line and increasing the number of on-line courses.

Issues of identity verification, demand for instructors who can teach courses in science and math, and potential problems surrounding the transfer of online credits to other schools can present obstacles to improving this delivery method. For these reasons, the federal government and accrediting agencies are taking a much more comprehensive examination of distance education policies and practices. There also is an issue of student completion in on-line courses. However, as the chart below indicates, on-line course pass rates have significantly improved in on-line sections.

Pass Rate Comparison-Online vs. Traditional On Site Courses

Course	Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	Online	On Site						
CSC 103	58%	70%	81%	86%	66%	76%	77%	85%
CSC 112	44%	69%	76%	81%	65%	88%	95%	86%
HIS 102	63%	78%	50%	75%	58%	77%	82%	86%
HIS 113	63%	77%	58%	78%	62%	77%	93%	87%
HIS 114	55%	78%	75%	79%	69%	77%	88%	90%
PSY 101	73%	82%	74%	89%	98%	93%	96%	97%
SOC 103	83%	79%	70%	84%	84%	83%	95%	98%

The College's current distance learning platform is outdated and will be replaced in 2015-16. In addition, the College has recently assigned a full-time employee to help oversee the distance education programs to address outcomes, retention, and increasing federal oversight of the distance education offerings.



PART IV

STRATEGIC PLANNING



OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEW

- 1 Ensure the community understands the requirements of assessment so that the College can create a positive institution-wide culture of assessment.
- 2 Establish a clearly delineated organizational structure with authorized control of ongoing outcomes assessment and program review.
- 3 Establish clear, goal oriented processes a meaningful evaluation of academic programs at both the outcomes assessment (OA) and program review (PR) levels.
- 4 Ensure that any changes to the outcomes assessment or program review processes are systematically evaluated to determine their effectiveness.
- 5 Enhance faculty development activities to be geared toward Outcomes Assessment and Program Review for the next five years.

Outcomes assessment is a required core institutional practice. It is mandated by the federal government and overseen by regional accreditors (Middle States Commission on Higher Education). The expectation is that every college will have a process where it assesses its programs and services on a periodic basis and then uses the data generated from the assessment to enhance the institution. The expectation is that outcomes assessment is a continuous activity of the faculty that results in positive institutional change. An institution must collect data and be aware of the effectiveness of its programs and processes. Faculty must not only analyze data, but also implement changes to improve results. Finally, the institution must evaluate the changes and determine if additional adjustments should be mandated. Evaluations must be done on a periodic and systemic basis.

WCCC currently has a three-pronged approach to outcomes assessment. The first approach is institution-wide, where the College examines the results and the performance of the entire college based on a number of measures that relate to success and productivity. These include enrollment data, retention data, graduation data and financial aid data. But there are also data that the college reviews to determine if programs, services or activities are effective. These include things such as audit reports, advising and registration statistics, room utilization statistics and other productivity measures.

The second and third approaches focus on the academic programs. Course Outcome Assessment (OA) focuses on the evaluation of individual courses within a program of study. Evaluations are done every semester through student opinion

reports, but each program of study also is asked to do a comprehensive assessment of key courses within their program every five years. The OA process is done in the year before the Program Review Process. Program Review (PR) is a systemic evaluation of the entire program of study. It is also done on a five year basis, in the year after the OA component has been completed. The OA/PR processes are faculty-driven. Results of the process have been uneven, often depending on the level of commitment from the faculty undertaking the process.

The College will have to consider whether this cycle is effective for meeting federal, state and accrediting association expectations, particularly in career-oriented credit programs. With an increased emphasis on accountability, the College may need to more aggressively undertake a shorter cycle of course and program assessment. WCCC also needs to consider how to best provide additional training to faculty so that they can most effectively oversee their assessment responsibilities. Ensuring campus-wide buy-in to assessment remains a key institutional priority.

There does remain a “disconnect” in WCCC’s assessment processes. The College has done a commendable job in systemically reviewing academic programs and offerings. However, as noted in the College’s 2013 Periodic Review Report, there is less evidence that this assessment results in meaningful program modifications or that the College is making demonstrable improvements in academic benchmarks. Focus on these will be a priority in the 2014-2019 timeline.

Through ongoing professional development, whether in-house or off campus, faculty will come to understand that assessment is an achievable and engaging part of their jobs. In the end, should the faculty not fulfill their professional responsibilities, the Board and administration should be prepared to take action for the sake of student learning; which can be enhanced by continuing to effectively utilize the twelve month, five day per week, "College Lecturer" position.

The processes at WCCC will move toward a culture of assessment, having all stakeholders, (i.e. administration, faculty, and students, participate in the process and thereby invest as a whole in the fulfillment of the mission of the College). The establishment of a clear goal oriented process and the addition of authorized control will give these processes some much needed strength and convey to the entire institution the long term significance of data driven improvements to programs.

Outcomes assessment and program review are high-stakes activities with potentially huge student learning ramifications for WCCC. The assessment of outcomes is the central professional responsibility of the faculty. Oddly, participation and engagement among faculty and staff can be a big challenge, and documenting the evidence that their actions lead to continuous improvement in student outcomes is an even bigger issue. Most importantly, WCCC wants to know that it is achieving its mission and goals.

The success of outcomes assessment activities will depend on developing a clearly delineated organizational structure with authorized control of ongoing outcomes assessment and program review. This could be a faculty-led team composed primarily of faculty from across disciplines who plan the program, develop tools for and implement it, and use the data obtained. Without such controls and commitment, WCCC risks having an assessment program in theory, not in practice.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT GOALS

- 1 Create a program to improve remedial education placement, sequence & outcomes.
- 2 Establish a plan whereby all students enrolled in developmental education courses will review their academic degree plan with an advisor each semester prior to registration.
- 3 Create a "fast track" strategy for students to bypass traditional developmental education courses; with co-requisite credit options combined in the strategy.
- 4 Examine the outcomes of using GPA and/or PARCC assessment for ability over the traditional ACCUPLACER placement strategy.
- 5 Implement and evaluate "Boot Camp" strategies improving ACCUPLACER placement assessments.
- 6 Examine the potential of incorporating additional resources into remedial education outcomes improvements such as, dedicated computer labs, supplemental tutoring, and developmental course "test-out" prep sessions.
- 7 Dedicate resources to the professional development and change process associated with remedial education renewal.
- 8 Review and implement developmental education improvement strategies identified in the consultant report that was recommended as part of the Middle States PRR review.



The contemporary legislative agenda coupled with a lack of substantive outcomes after years of discussion is placing a tremendous amount of pressure on community colleges to fast track or even remove remedial education requirements in many states. Although there is great debate over the best practices for change going forward, the legislators asking serious questions are correct in stating that the current status quo is neither desirable nor sustainable. The WCCC Board of Trustees, after a year of review, have identified the continued support of current practices as an issue of professional ethics.

Nationally, less than one quarter of community college students who enroll in developmental education complete a degree or certificate within eight years of enrollment. In comparison, almost 40% of community college students who do not enroll in any developmental education courses complete college in the same time period. To meet the Completion Agenda's goal of increasing the number of community college graduates by 5 million by 2020, it is necessary to significantly improve outcomes for under-prepared community college students.

Upon entering WCCC, most students are required to take the ACCUPLACER placement exam to assess their current math, reading, and writing skills. Results are used to place students into the appropriate developmental or college-level courses. While these assessments are designed to help place students at the appropriate academic level, and are fortified by earlier developmental education research, there is much debate as to their validity and the benefit for students. Further, recent research has questioned the validity of previously defined "cut scores" as indicative of college level success. Given the important role of assessment and placement in defining students' college careers, WCCC places a high priority on developing more nuanced placement methods and on understanding how they affect students' progress through college.

Some argue, and outcomes data supports, the idea that challenged students who are under-prepared for college reading and mathematics requirements are ill-served when they have to pass through a lengthy series of remedial courses before they can start earning college credit. Too often, they get discouraged and drop out before earning a single credit. At WCCC, placement into developmental reading suggests you have a 7% chance of graduating in four years, while placement into developmental writing suggests that your chance of graduating in four years rises to 9%. Placement in mathematics is a little better ranging from a four year low

graduation rate of 7% to a four year high of 22% based on the amount of remediation required. Placement in multiple developmental courses almost ensures that a student has no chance of graduating. These outcome statistics demand an immediate and dramatic change in practice, both at WCCC and nationally. It is important to note that given these statistics, WCCC maintain one of NJ's higher graduation rates.

Beginning in the Fall of 2013, WCCC ran a pilot study in our Instructional Support Center to assess whether or not the use of a calculator on a second attempt at passing the ACCUPLACER mathematics section assisted students in placing out of remedial courses. The results of this study are not complete, but early results have indicated that the use of the calculator may be a benefit to students. Use of calculators in the developmental classrooms may also be of some assistance. In another pilot study conducted in Spring 2014, high school students placing into developmental courses were given a 10-week prep course, after which 61% of the students placed out of remedial courses. This a significant improvement over the traditional sequence outcomes noted in the traditional practices.

Recent suggestions by NJ legislators include the requirement that all students file a degree plan upon matriculation and that degree programs provide concise benchmarks toward completion. This suggested legislation would assist under-prepared students to reach their academic goals. However, to be beneficial, these plans must be regularly reviewed with the student by an academic "coach" to be sure they are on course for graduation. Instructors, advisors, and staff members who work with student retention and course planning should be involved in this review process.

This plan coupled with the President's vision for a multiple pathways approach related to remediation could provide the radical transformation needed to progress these students toward graduation. A change in perception is occurring between the students' initial positive perception of support and graduation or transfer. Because nearly 73% of first-time, full-time students require one or more remedial courses, assisting this at-risk demographic is essential for future academic growth and improved graduation rates. Given current result levels, doing nothing would be the only inappropriate action. Still, the appropriate action remains controversial, even at the time of the authoring of this Strategic Plan. To this end, WCCC will use a multiple perspective approach strategy using outcomes to determine the best ultimate course of action.

ENROLLMENT & RETENTION PLANNING GOALS

- 1 Develop and implement a comprehensive enrollment management plan.
- 2 Expand co-curricular and recreational/physical health opportunities for students.
- 3 Promote student success and completion through expanded pathways to graduation.
- 4 Work with local high schools to provide additional opportunities for students to earn dual enrollment credit.
- 5 Create opportunities such as VIPER to allow students to apply experiential credit toward degree requirements.
- 6 Promote internship opportunities as a means for students to apply theory in practice in the workplace setting.

Since WCCC is a community college serving the residents of Warren County, the need to focus efforts on Warren County citizens is crucial. An enhanced marketing strategy must be implemented targeting the different high schools in the county aiming to boost the high school capture rate at each school. In addition, WCCC will work ensure that its marketing activities are inclusive so that our student population represents the diversity of the county.

One reason identified that students choose not to attend WCCC is a lack of physical amenities and programming compared to other regional community colleges. Given physical limitations for growth and the financial cost, it would be impossible for WCCC to duplicate the facilities at other colleges. Nor is this a priority of the Warren County taxpayers, who help fund the college. However, the College must continue to explore other options to provide additional co-curricular and recreational services to its students.

There are often enormous financial savings for families if students attend their first two years at a community college and then transfer to a four year institution. If a student graduates from a community college, they are guaranteed that their associate's degree credits will transfer to a four year college by a NJ law originally sponsored by Warren County State Senator Doherty. But some students transfer before they earn their associates degree and therefore have

transfer difficulties. The College needs to more effectively communicate the benefits of earning a community college degree to students who intend to pursue a Bachelor's degree at a NJ public college.

Retention and persistence are huge concerns for community colleges. WCCC must continue to enhance its initiatives to help students succeed, such as conducting a major overhaul of its orientation class, and also focus on better intervention strategies for at-risk students. The latter issue is something that will be explored with new retention software that should be implemented over the next two years.

WCCC has an opportunity to serve not only Warren County Veterans, but other regional veterans or active duty members through the VIPER program. However, before expanding VIPER (and on-line degree programs), the College will need to ensure that it has the necessary resources (human and technology) to support the delivery of enhanced on-line instruction.



DISTANCE EDUCATION GOALS

- 1 Implement a new Learning Management System that provides the necessary tools and capabilities for a quality online learning experience for its students.
- 2 Develop and implement a training program for students, faculty and staff to ensure that the LMS system can be used to deliver quality educational programs.
- 3 Ensure the academic integrity of all online courses and programs in accordance with Federal Law, Accreditation Standards, as well as, in periodic assessment.
- 4 Assess the need for future and current online degree and certificate programs, as well as individual courses offered, based on community or industry demand.

Residents who cannot attend traditional classes because of the realities of their lives need well developed alternatives. These adults are prime targets for distance learning. They are motivated to continue their education, but limited by circumstances in how they participate in college.

Even students on traditional campuses are opting for distance learning courses. However, the onus falls on the College to ensure several factors: that the time spent in this learning modality equates to that of the traditional environment, that mechanisms to ensure the integrity of the identity of those enrolled are in place, and that the outcomes for students in distance learning are equivalent to those student success rates of traditional classes. These issues need to be addressed systemically as WCCC moves to offer an online degree and to expand its VIPER program.

Colleges that are fully committed to online programs develop their courses more methodically. They develop courses based on market need and student requests. This can be an overwhelming challenge for the institution, particularly one such as WCCC whose history has been traditionally classroom based instruction.

Several key features define distance learning. The importance of the teacher/student communications cannot be overstated. Along with structured content that aligns with direct contact courses, these digital replicas must include a method of communication with faculty in order to create a connection between student and professor. To further the communication between distance learners and faculty, having faculty be available for online office hours lets distance learners feel they are getting the same attention and experience as an on-campus, full-time learner.

On-line courses allow students flexibility with scheduling. The percentage of web-based and web-hybrid courses (those courses that have both direct contact and web based components) WCCC offers had been increasing significantly since 2008. However, there has been decline in distance education enrollment over the past two years, and a review of the outcomes of student learning for these sections has raised concern over the effectiveness of current WCCC offerings.

Although the current Learning Management System (LMS) has served the College well throughout the years, WCCC will need to upgrade to a more robust platform that will meet the growing need for a more user friendly and active online presence, to create better outcomes, to ensure identity verification, and to further ensure an equality between online and traditional courses.

WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 Guide and support the economic development of our region with responsive, solution-driven workforce training programs.
- 2 Maintain active engagement with business and industry to develop solutions for workforce preparation.
- 3 Design programs around the skills and knowledge students need for employment to ensure that local business have a constant supply of highly skilled workers.
- 4 Develop and enhance partnerships, internal and external, that help identify and respond to the educational needs of the community.
- 5 Be recognized as a major partner in regional economic development efforts and activities.
- 6 Facilitate firm linkages between external regional stakeholders and internal stakeholders at WCCC to establish a comprehensive college-wide workforce training vision.

Many Americans agree that the workforce outcomes of postsecondary education are a key factor in the decision to go to college. A study by Gallup and Lumina Foundation surveyed a random sample of U.S adults. About two thirds of these respondents believed that “to get a good job” (67%) or “to earn more money” (65%) were very important reasons for getting education beyond high school. In another survey, conducted in May 2013, 41% of respondents said that “the percentage of graduates who are able to get a good job” was the most important factor in choosing which college to attend.

Strong partnerships between a community college and its local community are critical in ensuring that students are able to transition from College to the workforce. WCCC needs to enhance these partnerships over the next five years to benefit three interrelated goals: (1) prepare students for the workforce, (2) enhance economic development and (3) provide more services to students so they ensure a return on investment for their educational dollars invested at the College.

During the 2012 fiscal year, Warren County Community College added \$1.6 million to the community through corporate training and continuing education programs for local businesses. These investments in educating our business community and their workforce are vital to the long-term success of the College and Warren County.

By strategically investing in corporate development in the local community, as well as in regional businesses, WCCC can be poised to maintain an intricate role in the future economic growth and stimulus of the region. For the reasons suggested in the situational analysis, the College’s role in local economic development is vital to the success of the county and its ability to provide services to all residents.



HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING GOALS

- 1 Evaluate recruitment and hiring process for efficiency and improvement to ensure appropriate staffing and the success of new employees, as well as to meet the needs of our students and the community.
- 2 Evaluate the undergraduate and graduate transcripts of all applicants to ensure the hiring of the most academically accomplished future employees.
- 3 Ensure the competency and knowledge of faculty and staff through improved internal and external training opportunities to continually meet the needs of our students and the community.
- 4 Encourage and provide enhanced professional development, career development and improved performance management for faculty and staff, to improve leadership capabilities, job skills and productivity. Evaluate the use of professional development funds and determine if they are best serving the needs of enhancing programs and services for students.
- 5 Consider alternate forms and media for the delivery of Human Resources training.

Community colleges are no longer receiving the level of public funding envisioned in the early 1990's when governments were expected to fund 66% of public college needs. Currently, total NJ public funding accounts for less than 40% of WCCC's funding. It is imperative to think of ways in which the College can cut costs without curtailing quality.

One way in which WCCC may best serve students is through focusing new instruction hire on 12-month, full-time lecturer model. This new model allows for the employment of teaching professionals who spend more time on campus, with students, on their professional development and in understanding the complexity of the contemporary community college.

As an added bonus, this provides students more opportunities to interact with the professionals whom they can benefit from the most. More importantly, it provides the College with a year round resource to support academic programs, the instructional support center and other areas.

As WCCC moves toward adding more lecturer positions, it is beneficial to have increased professional development opportunities for all instructors (traditional faculty, lecturers, and adjuncts). This ensures that WCCC will continue to provide excellent educational foundations for students. In addition, as the College moves to this model, new hires can be reviewed to ensure the highest levels of academic accomplishment among applicants. This is the appropriate timing for such a shift as the Middle States accreditation standards are revised in 2018 and as the economic supply of persons desiring teaching positions far exceeds the demands of institutions for full-time instructors. This external opportunity should be fully explored and utilized by the Board and administration.

Finally, beginning in late 2013, WCCC began the process of converting to the new Jenzabar EX Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. This system will not only enhance web-based services for students (providing on-line application, registration, degree audit services, and the ability to print schedules, grades and transcripts) but also to help automate and streamline student service and finance office operations. In summer 2015, the College also will implement a new e-Learning system which will not only support distance education courses, but could also act as an electronic repository for College documents.

FACILITY PLANNING GOALS

- 1 Develop, design and construct a state-of-the art health education center on the campus of Hackettstown Regional Medical Center as soon as finances and property becomes available.
- 2 Create highly visible network approaches, entries, plazas and main spaces that model courtyards and 21st century learning environments to encourage student learning and collaboration outside the building and provide opportunities to build beneficial relationships with the general public.
 - Front Entry Courtyard and Main Plaza
 - Library Plaza
 - Eagles Nest Café Plaza
- 3 Develop existing main campus open space for cost-effective multi-purpose recreational activities that are funded through external resources.

There is a growing demand for new and well trained professionals in the Allied Health field, locally and nationally. The proposed Health Education Center will meet those needs upfront and provide additional pathways to high paying jobs for students, while boosting the economic development initiatives of the county. Curriculum planning and implementation at the Center will address the need for all levels of health science education and the increasing need for allied health care professionals in the community. This health center, in partnership with Hackettstown Regional Medical Center, will provide affordable, high quality education in Health Sciences for the county and the region.

As part of the fulfillment of the Facilities Master Plan, WCCC will work to create a collaborative learning environment by creating highly visible network approaches, entries, plazas and main spaces that will encourage collaborative and engaging learning experiences.

Development of outdoor spaces for multi-purpose recreational activities will provide a space for healthy open-air activities for students. The WCCC Foundation has accepted the responsibility to enhance the health and wellness of the students, faculty and staff as well as providing space for recreation to the community.



ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

- 1 Purchase new Jenzabar EX software through institutional and grant funds to support enhanced student, academic and financial information system needs as well as expanded student and faculty web access.
- 2 Design the new system to enhance services to students while also meeting both college and governmental data system needs and requirements.
- 3 Train WCCC employees and students to effectively use the new campus software during and after the implementation process.
- 4 Convert all student, academic and financial operations to the new EX platform by July, 2015.
- 5 Once the EX software is in use, evaluate the implementation process and determine where additional training and system enhancements may be needed.

The College purchased a new Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP) in FY14 called Jenzabar EX. This system is scheduled to be implemented in July, 2015. As part of the implementation, the College will need to review all of its supporting procedures and operations to ensure that it will be developing a system to promote “best practices” to serve students as well as federal, state, institutional and accreditor needs. It will be critical that employees are effectively trained on the use of the system and understand the capabilities and limitations of the system.

Part of the package purchased for the College includes retention software, an on-line portal (with mobile services) and a Learning Management System. These tools, if used effectively, will have enormous potential to enhance our on-line programs, improve communications with students and also support enhanced retention strategies and communications to students. The challenge for WCCC is to support the full use of new systems and leverage the technological capacities in these new systems to advance the programs and services of Warren County Community College.



PART V

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