Warren Community College

Strategic Plan Brief

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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5
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Strategic Direction 1:
Revitalize the student learning experience through new ideas and technologies to embrace new learning realities

Action Officer:
Dr. Marianne Van Deursen
VP of Academics

Fully implement the 'True Pathways" model to clarify effective paths from entry to credential achievement to include increased employment and transfer opportunities

- **Appointed a Director** to oversee the implementation of the Title III grant (which was College model for True Paths), providing leadership and accountability for pathway initiatives
- **Activated a steering committee** to guide these initiatives, helping to define tasks and responsibilities, while an Institutional Researcher was hired to provide critical data insights for tracking student progress
- **Hired two academic advisors** to support diverse student populations and guide them through academic pathways. Comprehensive advisor training sessions were held in June and October of 2024, with ongoing professional development planned to enhance advising services
- **Built a comprehensive retention plan**, in Sept of 2024, currently implementing
- **Established of a New Student Orientation (NSO) model** for FY24/25 and a revised earlier alert tracking
- **Transitioned to the CANVAS Learning Management System**, with ongoing training for faculty and staff. Select courses have already migrated from Jenzabar's LMS to CANVAS, with full implementation expected by the Spring semester, enhancing the digital learning experience and streamlining instructional support

Strategic Direction 1:
Revitalize the student learning experience through new ideas and technologies to embrace new learning realities

Action Officer:
Dr. Marianne Van Deursen
VP of Academics

Review liberal arts offerings to ensure that they are compatible with the needs of current students and incorporate not only the goals of DEI but fast emerging technologies, such as AI. Consider all new state proposals for reduced general education courses in favor of more competency-based education

While recognizing the continued relevance of liberal arts to a holistic education, the college integrates practical use of artificial intelligence (AI) and industry trends to optimize its liberal arts offerings

- The purpose is to ensure that WCCC's programs remain competitive and responsive to both educational standards and industry demands
- This initiative is will enhance the value and applicability of WCCC's course and program offerings in a rapidly changing academic and professional landscape
- As the Secretary of Higher Education, the New Jersey Presidents' Council, and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges work on developing and proposing new guidelines for the delivery of General Education across institutions of higher learning, our capacity to implement significant changes remains on hold

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VP of Academics

Optimizing the Student Enrollment process by re-aligning procedures, tailored to individual student needs

- **Standardized consistency** in advising and improving internal processes as a medium to improve professionalism
- **Instilling tools** such as: advising notes for better continuity, more meaningful staff meetings and professional development with funds from Title III grant and matching specific students to the most appropriate advisor for them
- **Implemented the "Triage Model"** designating a first-tier of advisors to handle walk-in transactions while more complex advising needs were directed to a second-tier advisors through scheduled appointments
- **Maintaining an institutional program** for continued training and monitoring throughout 2024-2025

Strategic Direction 1:
Revitalize the student learning experience through new ideas and technologies to embrace new learning realities

Action Officer:
Dr. Tony Perone
Dean of Enrollment Management

48 Internships & growing | 3 Diverse Community Service areas | Letters of Appreciation credentialing success

Enhance student engagement, student access, and institutional visibility

- **Our students have advisors stationed at key tables** along the students' paths to classes to maintain accessibility
- **The email chain newsletter** informs students about student services resources and helping them navigate their academic careers, with timelines and key dates and "check ins" updates with their advisors

Increase academic and student development opportunities by integrating student life, community service, co-curricular activities, internships, experiential learning opportunities, civic engagement and service learning into programs of study

- **Pursuing** Summer 2023/Spring 2024 Internships at NJ Transit
- **13 Summer 2024** Internships in UAS Program
- **Community Service** with the Washington Community Food Pantry, Carol Kain.
- **22 Internships available** for BIO 291 I Environmental Studies Internship/Capstone Project, 1 credit
- **12 Internships available** for BUS 293 Co-operative Education Internship, 3 credits
- **Community Service** with the Warren County Habitat for Humanity ReStore
- **Community Service** Lions Club. A TBA service activity

Student Services supports future student success with a letter of appreciation for their service on college letterhead.

Strategic Direction 1:
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Action Officer:
Dr. Will Austin
President of Warren Community College

TITLE III

We successfully gained external funds for student services that promote student success, and additional funds for a state-of-the-art student learning management system

- The program helps the college to become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions
- We chose Title III funding as the best external fund source to realize this goal, sought and applied for in 2022-23 and awarded in 2023
- We implemented Title III which provided resources in financial and human additions and the Canvas LMS to enhance student success outcomes.
- Results of implementation will be measured at the completion of this plan

Strategic Direction 2:
Enhance community relations & provide next-generation workforce development initiatives to both employers and students

Action Officers:
Dr. Marianne Van Deursen VP of Academics
Eve Azar VP of Continuing Education

Promote the college as a leading provider of workforce and economic development solutions and corporate training in the region by delivering high-quality training and instruction that enables growth, success, and the development of academic programs (both credit and non-credit) that focus on the workplace and workforce of the future

- **Leadership Statewide:** Warren Community College exceeded enrollment expectations in FY 2023 aided by the Title II Adult Basic Skills Grant & our Workforce Development Program achieved a 100% Placement rate
- **Credentialing at the National Level: Most Medical Assisting students** received national credentials and secured employment in the healthcare sector. Enrollment increased because of the hybrid medical assisting program
- **Expanding opportunities to excel across Industries:** served a range of industries and organizations, leading to a 66% increase in NJBIA Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Training grant utilization, alongside significant growth in training hours and business participation. Initiatives such as "Spanish in the Workplace" training for Sussex County Community College employees highlight Warren's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its region
- **Leverage partnerships nationwide**: Example, our Embry Riddle partnership for UAS and a plethora of non-credit partnerships have elevated our students into opportunities for $110,000 per annum careers immediately post hire. Fully supported by Riddle administration – Fall 2024, President, Chancellors, and Board of ERAU met in Prescott and came to joint faculty training to learn about partnership and joint research projects.

Warren Community College

Strategic Direction 2:
Enhance community relations & provide next-generation workforce development initiatives to both employers and students (Slide #2)

Expand non-credit offerings and partner with other colleges and educational providers to share unique high-tech program offerings with additional service regions to expand college revenue sources

- **Our UAS program reaches two other community colleges**; In 2023, Bucks County College, In 2024, Raritan Valley Community College hosted WarrenUAS program on their respective campuses.

- **We are shaping the future of UAS education and industry implementation**; We co-wrote the 2024 NJ EDA Grant with NJII (of NJIT) faculty to provide non-credit energy industry training throughout the state

- **Expansion to keep up with demand:** In 2024 we formed strategic partnerships consisting of dual enrollment programs with Boonton and Roxbury High Schools for a 3-credit drone technology course, and a partnership with Tracer Drones Technology to provide services to Avangrid, a major U.S. energy company

- **Integrated industry needs, keeping our curriculum relevant**: We were instrumental in the College Consortium's Manufacturing Pathway, securing regional employers for its Certified Production Technician training, set to launch in 2025. Additional partnerships included the Northeast Organic Farmers Association, which will host Warren's new Precision Agriculture program in 2025, and the Hunterdon Warren NWNJ Beekeeper Association, through which NJ Beekeeper certification will be offered. Warren also provided private-pay ESL training to Thorlabs, fostering employee development from FY 2023 to FY 2025.

Strategic Direction 2:
Enhance community relations & provide next-generation workforce development initiatives to both employers and students

Action Officer:
Dr. Marianne Van Deursen VP of Academics

Tailor programmatic offerings to focus on high-value niche programs that enhance the prosperity and life of residents

- **Drone/UAS enrollment doubled in FA24**. $100K+ – Salaries for SP24 Drone grads. Oct 2024 ACCT Congress Presentation on program benchmarks. New A.S. Degree in progress scheduled for approval in Spring 2025.
- **Revitalizing our Computer Science program**, with a strong focus on Cybersecurity and Programming.
- **Development of a Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Associate in Science degree,** as well as an option within the existing A.A.S. UAS degree focused, specifically on robotics. Anticipated Implementation: Academic Year 2025-2026
- **Developing a HiTech A.A.S. degree in Food Processing** to align with regional industry needs for 2026-7. These initiatives reflect the commitment to explore and create niche programs that respond to the evolving demands of businesses and industries in Warren County, ensuring that educational offerings are relevant and impactful for the local workforce
- **Researching partnerships** and collaborative exercises to expand health related offerings.
- Constantly looking for **new program champions** to implement new programs for students and the community.

Strategic Direction 2:
Enhance community relations & provide next-generation workforce development initiatives to both employers and students

Action Officer:
Barbara Pratt VP Operations

Renew the college website to better inform the students and community of college activities and requirements as well as developing a presence that better highlights all educational offerings and student success

- **ISSUE: We are currently economizing our staffing to keep pace w**ith all required reporting deadlines and NJ and federal grants, grant reporting, and new state financial requirements. Recommend hiring a web designer for 2025
- As of October 15, the basic build-out has been completed and 80% of the content has been added
- We took on the challenge of reviewing, deleting and reconfiguring over 500 pages of content on the prior site with 90% or more totally outdated
- The goal is to make this just an outward-facing site except for the materials that we are required by law to publish on the website

Strategic Direction 3:
Focus on access, equity, and inclusivity while also improving student learning outcomes simultaneously

Action Officer:
Dr. Tony Perone
Dean of Enrollment Management

Revise marketing and social media campaigns to concentrate on degrees offered and student realization of success in careers related to these chosen academic programs

- Our marketing focus will highlight degrees that have been projected to increase in the coming 10 years per U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics

- Nursing +6% | Medical Assisting +15% | Physical Therapy Asst. +19% | Unmanned Systems, Drone Pilot, Precision Agriculture | Computer Information Science- Information Security Analyst (Cybersecurity), Kean and Centenary Universities offer BS degrees. +33% | Business Adm | Accountants +6% | Police and Probation Officers +4%

Increase enrollment from Post-Covid semester (Fall 2022) by 15% by the conclusion of the plan (December 2025)

- Measure in FA2025; final measurement set for Fall 2025 to determine if the goal is reached or not.
- Fall 2022 – Fall 2024 -4% difference
- Spring 2025 registration was opened on 9/23/24

Strategic Direction 3:
Focus on access, equity, and inclusivity while also improving student learning outcomes simultaneously

Action Officer:
Dr. Will Austin
President

Author and secure a Title lll grant focused on academic program and student success enhancement

- Completed 9/27/2023
- The Title III grant was successfully authored and awarded within the first year of this strategic plan including the hiring of our first DEI officer in December of 2023.

Expand staffing with positions that can concentrate on revenue enhancement like grant or external fund development and expanded recruitment through a more dynamic social media presence

- Social Media presence - training for Tony
- Full staffing at Warren was realized for the first time since prior to COVID in Fall 2024 for Warren County Community College. Resources had been a previous deterrent to reaching a full staffing complement, as had post-COVID workforce norms.
  - Maintaining this level of resources will become the ongoing challenge. NJ anticipating and suggesting that higher education brace for 5% to 20% cuts from the Murphy administration for the 2025-2026 academic year. NJ Governor's Office has publicly admitted the state is scheduled to fall off a fiscal cliff as the governor leaves office next year.

Strategic Direction 4:
Ensure capital funds are invested wisely to ensure key program and community facility needs and facility longevity

Action Officer:
Barbara Pratt VP Operations

Complete and renew the deferred maintenance plan to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of the institution, anticipated for final Board approval in February 2025.

- Paul Sterbenz, College Engineer to provide a more comprehensive roadmap from prior maintenance studies and includes some of the infrastructure that was put in place even before the opening of the facility (for example: water and sewer lines, drainage systems, in addition to HVAC needs, roofing needs, electrical upgrades, restroom upgrades complete by December 2024

Solicit private funding to expand outdoor learning and recreational spaces

- $100,000 SP24 – Contemplation Garden: $100k from Commissioners. Project largely funded with external resources

Initiate the data development process to author a renewed 2025-2030 Facilities Master Plan based on post-Covid realities prior to the next Middle States visit

- Begins in January 2025 and should be completed by Fall 2025
- This plan will review any growth or retrofit necessary for current facilities to meet programming needs. It will review our Highlands and Wetlands restrictions, as well as limitations in the County wastewater processing plant and whether we will have any interior restructuring that may be done with existing space that does not impact the total footprint, which may not be legally possible at this point.

Strategic Direction 5:
Provide stable and sustainable resources to enable the institution to invest in new and renewed technologies and in improved instructional quality

Action Officer:
Samir Elbassiouny

Increase Foundation resources by developing a robust alumni giving program

- Alumni Engagement and Recognition Events | Hall of Fame Induction dinner | Networking mixers | workshops| Reunions to engage alumni.
- Utilize social media platforms | Campaigns that encourage alumni to share their own stories and support the college
- Peer-to-Peer Fundraising | Encourage alumni to create personal fundraising campaigns to support specific projects or scholarships.
- Matching Gift Programs | Partner with local businesses to establish matching gift programs that can double the impact of alumni donations

➢Develop a long-term Foundation giving program that establishes a renewable $2-million restricted funds for facility renewal

- Strategic Partnerships. Collaborate with local businesses, government agencies. These partnerships can provide additional funding, resources.
- Education and Awareness Programs. Develop workshops, seminars, and community events to educate elected officials and stakeholders about the importance of facility renewal and renewable practices. This can enhance community engagement and attract potential donors.
- Legacy Giving Programs. Encourage supporters to include the foundation in their estate plans, providing a sustainable source of funding for future facility renewals.

Strategic Direction 5:
Provide stable and sustainable resources to enable the institution to invest in new and renewed technologies and in improved instructional quality

Action Officer:
Barbara Pratt VP Operations

Build a sustainable financial model that utilizes a conservative budgeting process where resources are directed to the strategic priorities identified in this plan and ensures strategic saving to ensure long-term fiscal vitality of the college

- Received **High Fiscal Viability** independent rating provided by the state of NJ in Fall 2024. This is the highest level of fiscal accountability provided to a college as part of this study
- The College has an annual operating budget that is reviewed by the Audit and Finance Committee and updated every six months; WCCC currently assessing how Capital Renewal, and Replacement Needs or any new or modified program within this multi-year plan
- It is recommended that institutions set aside an operating reserve of at least 3 months of payroll expenses (which also equates to 10-12% of budget costs) annually as a college reserve) WCCC has met this goal annually for over the last decade plus funds to accomplish current and proposed projects.
- Where feasible, WCCC incorporates restricted grant funds to financially accomplish current and new initiatives proposed
- This fall, the College completed installation of approximately 50% of the Equipment Leasing fund equipment to enhance classroom technology. The balance will be completed over the summer of 2025

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Strategic Direction 5:
Provide stable and sustainable resources to enable the institution to invest in new and renewed technologies and in improved instructional quality

Action Officers:
Joe Labarbera, Dean of Accountability

Reallocate resources to serve student needs, investing in high-performing programs and divesting resources from programs with low enrollment and/or limited student success

- Two academic programs, Graphic Arts and Web Design (FA2023) and Creative Writing (SP2024), have been placed on moratorium due to low enrollment and student success concerns.
- Executive administrators have established a new scheduling process that launched, effective Fall 2024-Spring 2025.

Develop a long-term staffing plan to reflect current enrollment realities and five-year enrollment projections

- Plans for 2025 include identifying growth opportunities in academic programs and developing a new staffing model, particularly to address reliance on grant-funded positions amid budgetary constraints and inflation

Summary of Strategic Plan

Vision and Strategic Directions

- Our students achieve tangible success while maximizing a holistic education
- The Warren experience builds future leaders
- Passionate and successful leveraging of internships and connections to the community
- Innovative and adaptive enrollment processes
- Imaginative and practical procurement and uses of funding
- Establishing legacy for the college, the community and its students

2024-2025 Presidential Priorities

1. Educate the college community and external community of the impact of last three years of inflation on the college, its budget, its staffing, and managing the **incremental budget demands** of the newly realized permanent economy.
   - 100% of the costs of operating Warren County Community College have increased;
   - Inflation has negatively impacted the value of a college degree as minimum wages for no-skill jobs currently equate to entry level jobs for most Associate Degree earners;
   - The State of NJ, publicly admits it cannot afford its already enacted social welfare policies, leading to a fiscal cliff in the next two coming years, negatively impacting state funding; and
   - Local funding is already negatively impacted by the Highlands, lack of social services for “post-covid newcomers,” and their own limitations on budget impacted by inflation as well.
2. Develop a plan to address the Warren Community College fiscal cliff that will be realized if we cannot maintain external fund realization in Appropriations, Grants, and Contracts as public funding declines over next two years
3. Work with Marketing Team to raise enrollment to increase ongoing operating funding through tuition and fees
4. Manage staff to learn to seek external funds for themselves.
5. Seek partnerships that allow Warren Community College to meet student and resident needs at lower cost through collaboration.
6. Integrate artificial intelligence into the operations of the college wherever possible.