

DRAFT

NECC 2020

Strategic Lens

The Strategic Lens represents the major components that are integral to the mission of the college. Our **students** and their success are at the heart of the college's efforts. **Faculty and staff** provide the essential education, training, and support services that fortify this success. Our physical **campus** is an inclusive environment that supports these initiatives and that must be well equipped and technologically up-to-date. And our role in building partnerships in the **community** strengthens our college and our region. These components drive everything we do and have helped shape the direction of our Strategic Goals.

Strategic Goals

Goal Name: Integrated Student Experience

- **Design and deliver an integrated, structured, and inclusive student experience across campuses that maximizes student success.**

Colleges flourish when the student experience empowers students to take ownership of their success. Every stop on the student pathway—from recruitment and early college, to financial aid and support services, to academic achievements, retention, and completion—is guided and seamlessly connected through personal relationships with faculty and staff, buttressed by an efficient infrastructure that links organization, technology, facilities, and services across campuses. Ensuring access for students and preparing them to meet their educational goals, enter the world of work, and be informed, active citizens in our global society is paramount.

Goal Name: Student Career Opportunities

- **Provide students with comprehensive career development services including access to internships, career exploration, experiential learning, and job placement.**

The student learning experience is not limited to the classroom. Internship placements, service learning, and other experiential learning opportunities in the field provide hands-on experiences, enhancing the student's value to prospective employers and for transfer to higher levels of education. Mentorship, job shadowing, industry/worksites tours, and informational interview opportunities also enable students to learn about the workplace. Providing students with comprehensive tools for career exploration and development throughout their academic experience contributes to long-term success of students.

Goal Name: Professional Growth

- **Increase opportunities for faculty and staff that encourage professional growth, foster experimentation, and advance curriculum innovation.**

Our faculty and staff prosper when they can continue to strengthen their practice throughout their careers. Whether that be through facilitated learning, conference attendance, cross-functional teams, or other collaborative endeavors, opportunities for professional growth for both full and part-time employees are essential. Further, the college must be flexible and support these efforts by enabling innovation and promoting the development of new models for curriculum such as those that provide transformative learning, guided pathways, global experiences, distance learning, integrative and accelerated learning, and competency-based education.

Goal Name: External Partnerships

- **Expand and strengthen partnerships with the external community.**

Northern Essex is a community college in which the concept of community is as vital as the term college. This is demonstrated when the college reaches out to forge partnerships and deepen its academic, cultural, social, and economic impact within the region and around the world. Partnerships with other institutions of higher education, PK-12, and with businesses, community groups, donors, and others, all add value to the student experience and to the college as a whole.

Other Planning Efforts

Planning initiatives at Northern Essex encompass more than these Strategic Goals. For example, the Academic Master Plan serves as a blueprint for pursuing the college's academic goals. Based on feedback received during the college's Strategic Planning process, efforts are now underway to develop a Technology Master Plan that addresses institutional needs across areas, as well as a Safety and Security Plan that comprehensively addresses emergency management planning on the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses.

Strategic Plan Process and Timeline

- April 2015: Initial planning began by meeting with the All College Assembly Executive Committee.
- June 2015: The Board of Higher Education Strategic Plan Review Committee convened campuses undertaking Strategic Planning in the 2015-2016 academic year cycle.
- June 2015: 12 members of the college community participated in Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Training. They, along with others who previously participated in training, formed the NECC 2020 Strategic Planning Steering Committee.
- September 2015: The official kick-off occurred during Fall Convocation with the implementation of an Appreciative Inquiry exercise. 168 Inquiry Guides were completed along with 27 sheets of newsprint and 27 Inquiry Guide notes. For those individuals not able to attend Convocation, the Inquiry Guide was also posted on the college's website.
- September and October 2015: A Data Synthesis Team developed six themes culled from the above materials:
 - Integrated Student Experience;
 - Student Success;
 - Career Exploration and Development;
 - Curriculum Innovation;
 - External Partnerships; and
 - Professional Development.
- October and November 2015: These themes then served as the basis for the more than 15 SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) Forums that occurred on both campuses. For those unable to attend a Forum, the SOAR Forum Questionnaire was also available on the college's website so that the college community could access, complete, and submit the Questionnaire online. About 200 completed questionnaires were received.
- December 2015: A core Writing Team reviewed all of the feedback and information received to date and set about drafting broad Strategic Goals.
- January 2016: A draft of the new Strategic Plan was presented at Spring Convocation in January 2016. The draft Plan was posted on the college's website and the college community was encouraged to provide preliminary feedback (anonymously) through that vehicle.
- March 2016: Given 'Work to Rule,' no concerted activity occurred from January through March 2016. The ACA scheduled a special meeting in March to conduct an Open Forum to discuss the draft Plan and to gather information about possible measurements and benchmarks. It was also a call for volunteers to join Goal Teams and shape the direction and implementation of NECC 2020.
- April 2016: A collegial meeting (Touchpoint 2) with the Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan Review Committee is planned under the Board's Guidelines. This is a point in the planning process by which the overall shape of the Plan has been given preliminary definition but early enough that changes can still be made. The goal of the meeting is to discuss the emerging Plan and its goals, metrics, and strategies tied to the Vision Project outcomes with special emphasis on "The Big Three Completion Plan:"
 - Boost College Completion Rates;
 - Close Achievement Gaps; and
 - Attract and Graduate More Students from Underserved Populations.
- April and May 2016: Goal Teams continue work on developing the Plan.
- June 2016: Affirmations and approvals will be sought from the Executive Committee of the All College Assembly, the college's Board of Trustees, and the Board of Higher Education.