



### **Annual Report: 2015-16 Academic Year**

The Mercy College 2020 Strategic Plan, finalized in February 2015, specifies four strategic goals and related objectives that are rooted in the College's mission of providing transformative educational experiences to students. The strategic goals focus on student learning, support for student success, affordability and stability, and building a college community. The development of the plan was informed by evidence from: focus groups conducted with faculty, staff and students; data-rich self-studies of the first year experience and of the institution during the decennial review; institutional indicators, and market data on enrollment and regional trends. To evaluate progress on the plan, metrics for each strategic goal were identified and reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee in spring and fall 2015.

The College identified funding that is allocated annually to support strategic initiatives linked to the plan. Those initiatives have been noted with an asterisk in this report.

The report for each goal, below, outlines the key strategic activities that contributed toward our strategy in the second year of the plan. The time frame for this report is July 2015 through June 2016. The college has continued to advance the strategic activities identified in the 2014-15 report.

## Goal 1: Student Learning

### Notes on Metrics

- a. *Teaching Effectiveness*: The SPC recognizes the importance of teaching effectiveness initiatives to improving the quality of student learning. Over the next few months, the SPC will work with OTEEL, CAEI and the academic schools to identify a more significant metric in this category.
- b. *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Results*: The SPC recognizes that the utility of NSSE results is limited by the low student response rate and representativeness of the student body. NSSE response rates increased from 15% to 23% in AY15-16.

### KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Co-requisite Remediation\***: Redesigned introductory mathematics courses to include additional support and remediation in college-level courses (Math 115 or 116) and eliminated the introductory Math 105 course. The redesigned course follows an emporium model that minimizes faculty time lecturing; instead, students use interactive software and receive on-demand, personalized faculty assistance.
2. **Nursing Program**: Launched the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree with a cohort of 40 students in fall 2015; the program prepares students for licensure and professional nursing practice.
3. **Turbo MBA**: This new program was expanded to reach more students
4. **Pulse on Learning (PoL)**: Implemented PoL (formerly called Early Student Feedback), a multi-step process to improve teaching effectiveness and improve student learning by gathering immediately usable feedback from students early in a term on how they are experiencing the learning environment. 27 faculty participated in PoL in AY15-16.

## Goal 2: Student Success

### Notes on Metrics

- a. *Licensure and Certification Rates*: Various programs and accrediting bodies require licensure and certification rates to be presented in different ways; the SPC will work with the Deans and relevant Unit Heads to determine the best way to present this information for use in decision support.

### KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Health and Wellness Center\***: Established a Health and Wellness Center at the Dobbs Ferry campus that includes a nurse practitioner and two additional mental health counselors. In AY15-16, 800+ students participated in counseling; 2,960 participated in health visits; 38 student programs were offered with 1,229 attendees.
2. **Transfer PACT\***: Expanded the PACT model to include all undergraduate transfer students with a goal of improving retention of that population. In its first year, the College saw a 3.2-point gain in retention of new transfer students to achieve a 10-year high of 80.7% retained.
3. **Guided Pathways**: Developed components of a system to improve retention and graduation by ensuring each student knows the path to graduation and stays on it. Academic programs outlined default pathway for each degree program and identified milestone courses; invested in an online platform that will provide advisors with information about when a student falls off-track.

4. **Block Scheduling:** Faculty and administrative workgroup built the infrastructure to support cohorts of entering students who will take courses together in the fall and spring of their freshmen year, with the goal of creating a sense of connectedness to faculty and the institution – and each other. To launch in fall 2016.
5. **Achieving Mavericks\*:** Piloted a grant program (modeled on the HEOP program) that provided travel and book vouchers to 47 high-risk students, with a goal of increasing persistence and retention.
6. **Faculty/Student Engagement Grants:** Invested in micro-grants to increase faculty-student social interaction outside the classroom setting to help in enriching the student experience.

### **Goal 3: Affordability and Financial Health**

#### **KEY INITIATIVES**

1. **Mercy Scholars:** Received donations to launch a scholarship fund and cohort program to support high-achieving students who have strong financial need. Recipients receive support in the form of funds for tuition, fees and book vouchers, as well as social programming.

### **Goal 4: College Community**

#### **KEY INITIATIVES**

1. **Residence Hall:** Founders Hall opened in spring 2016, on time and under budget. This new 100,000 sq. ft., four-story residence hall has 350 beds and increased on-campus housing capacity to 670 students.
2. **BronxNet:** Opened a new state-of-the-art television studio facility for BronxNet at the Bronx Campus.
3. **Bright Spot in Hispanic Education:** Honored by the White House for our commitment to educating Latino students. Participated in the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics to talk about Mercy's programs, models and initiatives that are helping to close the achievement gap.
4. **Brand Launch:** Relaunched the Mercy brand to unify the messaging – with a focus on celebrating the grit and enthusiasm of our students – and create a strong brand identity through the use of various messaging, colors, fonts, words and graphics.