



Annual Report: 2017-18 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 2017 through June 2018. The college has continued to advance the strategic activities identified in the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 reports.

Goal 1: Student Learning

Note on Metrics

- a. *Academic Challenge, High Impact Practices, Effective Teaching Practices and Student Faculty Interaction*: The College did not administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in spring 2018; therefore, these metrics are not available for AY17-18.

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Support for Adjunct Faculty Members***: Expanded initiatives to support adjunct excellence, including (a) the Fundamentals of Teaching excellence professional development course (64 faculty participated in AY17-18); (b) developing electronic Course Handbooks (in AY17-18, handbooks were created for 25 courses with a large number of sections taught primarily by adjuncts); and (c) course revisions driven by findings from the Pulse-on-Learning mid-term course evaluations (in AY17-18, 22 faculty participated in such redesign).
2. **Inclusive Excellence Initiative**: In June 2018, the college was awarded a \$1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to develop models that will build capacity to effectively engage all students in science education. Over the next five years, the college will work to develop, implement and assess two interrelated initiatives to increase capacity for inclusions: an Adjunct Academy to develop engaged and interculturally-competent adjunct faculty who are reflective of student needs across our biology curriculum, and the expanded use of analytics to better understand and address factors that impact student success.

Goal 2: Student Success

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **PACT 101:** Piloted a web-based environment for freshmen to engage with their PACT mentor and peers as they transition to college. The PACT 101 online module is conducted from matriculation to the college in fall through the end of the academic year. PACT 101 provides students with additional opportunities to think about their academic program, career exploration, financial aid and getting involved on-campus. In AY17-18, 96.8% of freshmen participated in the PACT 101 pilot.
2. **Meta Majors:** Developed “meta majors” for students at the Bronx campus which will be piloted in fall 2018. The purpose of the meta-majors is to allow students unsure of which particular major to pursue to acquire foundational courses applicable to a broad array of majors, while engaging in opportunities to explore their academic path.
3. **Career in Curriculum (EPIC by TuaPath Pilot)*:** Pilot TuaPath (high quality, web-based career modules) to provide career content to be used in conjunction with academic courses. Used as homework assignments, these milestones (organized into the phases of career development: Explore, Prepare, Implement, and Career Launch) guide students to learn through self-reflection, critical thinking, and skills building. In the spring 2018 pilot with 11 faculty partners, 279 participating students completed 1875 career milestones.
4. **Career Communities:** Launched seven industry-based career communities for students to begin exploring career options as soon as they matriculate at the college. By joining one or more communities in Career Maverick, students will hear from their career community leader about events, internships, resources, and advice specifically for their career interests. In AY17-18, 3201 students, or 41.32% of undergraduate students, joined at least one career community.
5. **Mav Friendly Market:** In AY17-18, the college expanded its programming to address food insecurity by broadening its food pantry at the Bronx Campus (fall 2017) and planning for the opening a food pantry at the Dobbs Ferry Campus (fall 2018). The college was awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA who will work with the college to expand partnerships with local food banks and others to ensure the sustainability of the initiative. In AY17-18, 852 meals were provided to members of the Mercy community at the Bronx Campus.
6. **Career Closet:** The Career & Professional Development team launched a pilot at the Bronx Campus to provide free professional attire for students to wear to job interviews and internships. 56 students received professional clothing in the Spring semester.

Goal 3: Affordability and Financial Health

Note on Metrics

- a. *Student Affordability*: The Carnegie Classification used to calculate the tuition ranking changed in AY17-18; therefore, the metric is not currently available in a format that can be used to compare to historic performance.

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Maintain Dobbs Ferry Enrollment at Capacity while Increasing Overall New Student Enrollment**: Engaged in a number of recruitment strategies aimed at increasing new student enrollment: (a) implemented tier-based allocation of human resources to feeder high schools and community college based on yields and potential to increase yield; (b) added instructional resources and course offerings to the Bronx campus to support enrollment there, particularly in the area of health science; (c) refocused additional admissions and marketing resources to Long Island to counteract recent declines in this market; (d) operationalized admissions leadership positions added to Bronx and Manhattan; and (e) developed a Mercy scholarship program (ASPIRE) as an alternative to the New York's Excelsior and ETA programs.
2. **Mercy Scholars**: Added a second donor-funded cohort in fall 2017 to support high achieving students with a OEFC to graduate college in four years and with minimal debt. The program provides students financially (providing the balance of tuition, books and fees not covered by a federal Pell Grant and NYS TAP), academically, socially and emotionally. The second cohort of 26 students saw a 92.3% retention rate to fall 2018.
3. **Adult Learner Summit**: In spring 2018, the college hosted a summit for 100 faculty and staff to focus on strategies to more effectively recruit and support adult students. Students over 25 years old currently make up over 30% of our undergraduate population. The event was co-hosted by leaders from the Council on Adult & Experiential Learning, a known industry thought-leader in this area. As a result of the summit, the college will begin to implement a number of strategies targeted at more effectively serving this student population.
4. **Reorganization of Information Technology**: Renegotiated Ellucian IT contract and reorganized in-house services to minimize expense and maximize institutional performance. In-house Helpdesk services team will launch in January 2019; and efforts will continue to increase the number of workflows and other technology supported efficiencies.

Goal 4: College Community

Note on Metrics

- b. *Personalized Education Environment and Activities to Instill Civic Responsibility*: The College did not administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in spring 2018; therefore, the metric is not available for AY17-18.

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Professional Development**: In spring 2017, launched a series of workshops and webinars to engage staff in learning more about the college, higher education careers, management tools and other skills that will enhance their professional development. In AY17-18, 127 unique employees from across the four campuses participated in at least one of the 44 available workshops offered in-person and online.
2. **Service Excellence**: In spring 2018, launched a college-wide Service Excellence initiative to focus on addressing ways to encourage, communicate, and measure service to students, to review and resolve obstacles, and to incorporate our philosophy and standards into the college's hiring and performance review practices. By spring 2018, 62% of staff members were trained on service excellence; additional staff will be trained and initiatives rolled-out over the next year.
3. **Train Path**: Worked with the town of Irvington and Metro North to construct a pedestrian pathway between the Dobbs Ferry campus and the Ardsley-on-Hudson train station. Train path was completed in fall 2018.
4. **Improved Athletics Facilities**: Completed an addition to Victory Hall and renovated the expanded Victory Hall gym (opened fall 2018) to transform the facilities into a multi-use recreational facility that complies with NCAA and accessibility regulations while providing a bright lobby, modern locker rooms, updated staff offices, restrooms and a Mercy College Athletics Hall of Fame corridor. Redeveloped the hillside adjacent to the Dobbs Ferry athletic turf field (opened spring 2018) to provide amphitheater style seating for 300 spectators.