CHANGE MATTERS

Strategic Plan

2022 – 2025

COLUMBIA GREENE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Strategic Plan

Progress is impossible without change.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the heart of Columbia-Greene Community College's new strategic plan is the challenge of change – and the ability to maintain a clear vision for higher education in a world that changes so fast, so daily, and so profoundly all around us.

During the 2020-2021 academic year – in spite of the global pandemic – Columbia-Greene embarked in a new direction – reflecting, listening, and speaking about what matters most to the life of the College. The result is this strategic plan – a blueprint that is brave, courageous, bold, and responsive to the many challenges that confront Columbia-Greene as a learning community. Endorsed by the Board of Trustees in Fall 2021, the five overarching goals, with their accompanying objectives, spell out the priorities – and the vision – that will guide the work of the College for the next three years.
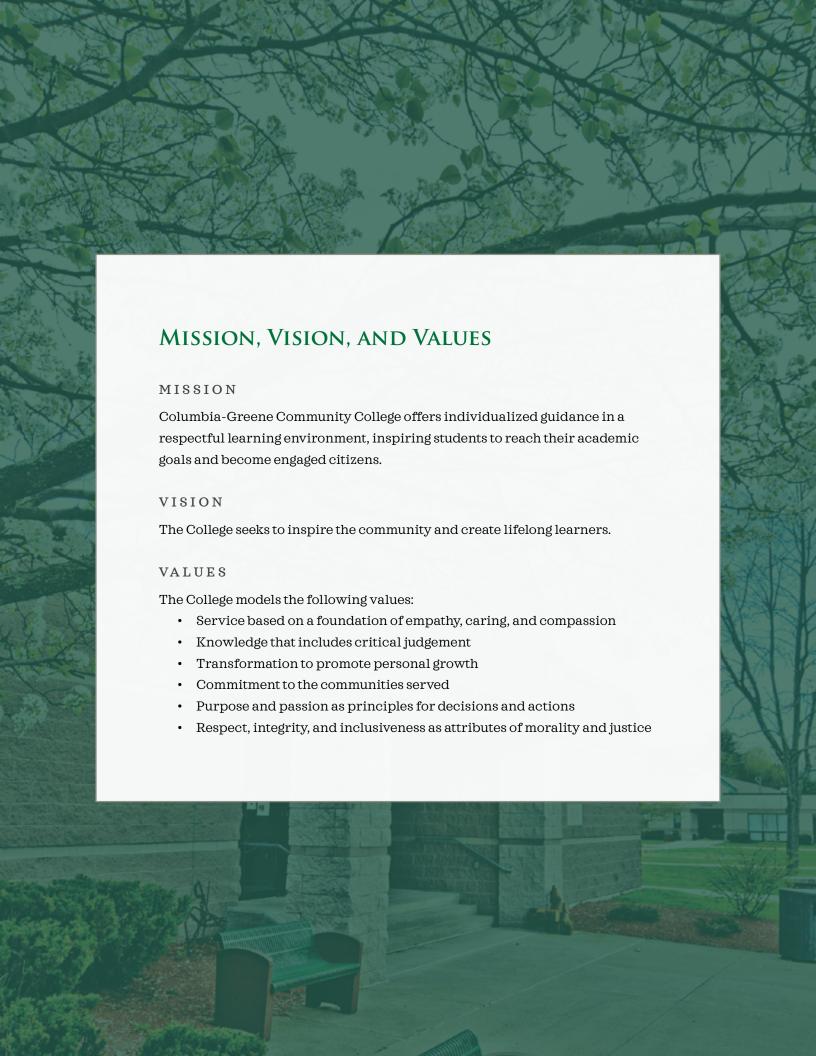
Each of the strategic goals calls us, in its own way, to be more mindful and informed by fresh perspective, either to do new things or to do old things in new ways. As the late statesman Vaclav Havel noted, "Vision is not enough. It must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps. We must step up the stairs."

While Columbia-Greene enjoys a reputation as one of the finest learning communities in the state of New York, we are mindful that we must continue to raise the bar as we prepare our students to meet the challenges of the post-pandemic world. Affirming an invigorated commitment to teaching and learning, the strategic goals foster both innovation and accountability.

Words cannot begin to express my gratitude to the Strategic Planning Committee who generously gave their time and resolute commitment to bring this monumental effort to fruition. In the months and years ahead, through our collective efforts and combined expertise, implementing these strategic goals will advance our culture of continuing improvement through change, ensuring a vibrant and sustainable institution well into the future. In the words of Isaac Asimov, "No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be."

Carlee Drummer

Carlee Drummer, Ph.D.
President

Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

Columbia-Greene Community College offers individualized guidance in a respectful learning environment, inspiring students to reach their academic goals and become engaged citizens.

VISION

The College seeks to inspire the community and create lifelong learners.

VALUES

The College models the following values:
- Service based on a foundation of empathy, caring, and compassion
- Knowledge that includes critical judgement
- Transformation to promote personal growth
- Commitment to the communities served
- Purpose and passion as principles for decisions and actions
- Respect, integrity, and inclusiveness as attributes of morality and justice

Strategic Planning Process

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES COMPRISING STRATEGIC PLANNING INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

FALL 2020 – SPRING 2021

Undaunted by the global pandemic, the Strategic Planning Committee convened at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester and began the arduous undertaking of identifying new goals and objectives that would provide the blueprint for Columbia-Greene Community College's operations between 2022 and 2025. Accomplishing this task could only be possible when a dedicated team of hard-working and committed individuals join forces.

Comprising 14 employees representing various areas of the College, the Committee members determined the first step in the process would be to conduct a SWOT (Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats) survey among key stakeholders including employees, students, alumni, Board of Trustees, and Columbia-Greene Community College Foundation Board members. The resulting SWOT analysis provided the foundation for the work ahead.

The Committee met virtually during the next two semesters and began brainstorming ideas for SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) goals that respond to current and emerging priorities for Columbia-Greene. This work also aligned with the preparation of the *Self-Study Document* for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaccreditation visit in Spring 2023.

SUMMER 2021

During the summer break, the Strategic Planning Committee formed working groups to identify goals, objectives, and benchmarks for the plan and then began drafting the document.

In August, the President's Executive Leadership Team received and reviewed the *Change Matters* draft and suggested modifications to be presented to the Committee.

FALL 2021 – SPRING 2022

At a special Town Hall meeting in early October, the Strategic Planning Committee presented the draft of *Change Matters* to all employees and key community stakeholders including the Board of Trustees and officials from Columbia and Greene Counties, to obtain suggestions and/or comments. After considering the recommendations offered, the Committee completed the final plan and submitted the document to the President's Executive Leadership Team for approval.

FALL 2022

Formally launch *Change Matters*, the 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan for Columbia-Greene Community College.

FALL 2024

Begin developing a new strategic plan. Affirmation or revision of the College's mission, vision, and values will occur as appropriate.

Key Characterstics and Trends

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Trends and characteristics of residents, businesses, educational institutions, public agencies and governments, other organizations, and the economy shape Columbia-Greene Community College's external environment. The external environment provides the setting within which Columbia-Greene develops and offers programs and services that respond to student, employer, and community needs. The external environment also affects resources available to the College.

To learn about the external environment, the College maintains close relationships with local, state, and national leaders; convenes meetings with employers; reviews public and professional literature; and analyzes data and information about the area, the state, and the global economy. Based on the above studies, the College identifies these important characteristics:

Population

The population of Columbia and Greene Counties has been declining since 2010. The 2020 census shows 109,501 people living in the communities that comprise the College's service area, a loss of 2.4 percent in the past decade. Projections indicate the population will continue to decline.

Ninety percent of residents are white. Other races represented are Hispanic/Latino (6.1 percent), Black or African-American (5.7 percent), Asian (1.7 percent), and American Indian and Alaska Native (.08 percent).

A significant number of residents have not continued their education beyond high school. Between the two Counties, only 28.8 percent hold a bachelor's degree compared with 39.1 percent statewide. According to the 2020 Census, the median household income for Columbia and Greene Counties was $68,750 and $56,681 respectively, compared to $71,117 statewide. Some 10.7 percent live below the poverty level.

Education

Thirteen public school districts educate the K-12 population in Columbia-Greene's service area – six in each County, plus Questar III, part of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in New York State, that serves Columbia, Greene, and Rensselaer Counties. The largest feeder schools to the College are Hudson and Catskill High Schools.

Explicit state and national mandates call for more college graduates. Shortly after the presidential election in 2008, the Obama administration set a goal that the nation should once again "have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world" by the year 2020. Unfortunately, the United States has made little progress, ranking sixth among the world's educated countries behind Canada, Japan, Israel, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.[1]

During her State of the State Address in January 2022, New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced a goal for seeing 66 percent of New Yorkers graduate with a college degree by 2030.

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[1] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Technology continues to expand with lightning speed as a never-ending array of new applications, equipment, and uses appear in the marketplace. Colleges and universities approach technology from multiple perspectives: as a tool to enhance learning and teaching; as the subject of study; and as a means to improve efficiency and effectiveness in managing the organization and delivering services to multiple constituencies.

With the onset of the global pandemic in 2020, course delivery options have exploded in the number of colleges and universities offering distance learning courses and the number of students taking them. At the same time, social media continues to transform the way people communicate for personal, educational, and professional reasons.

Business and Industry

The economic base and labor markets within Columbia-Greene's service area comprise a diverse array of small businesses and service providers mostly in agribusiness, the creative economy, hospitality, and travel and tourism.

Some 70 percent of the businesses in the Twin Counties have fewer than 10 employees. Trying to identify jobs with the most employability remains challenging. Of special concern is that fields with myriad job opportunities – such as manufacturing and engineering – are located in the Southern Tier, Finger Lakes, and Western New York regions.

Financial Trends

The amount and reliability of state support for SUNY community colleges remains precarious. In the last ten years, the community college sector has experienced reduced funding, necessitating increased support from the Counties and tuition increases to offset the deficit. Thanks to the resolute generosity of the Columbia-Greene Community College Foundation and diligent efforts of the financial aid staff, many students are able to receive financial assistance, a scenario that helps keep them on track with their educational journey.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In addition to examining trends and characteristics shaping the external environment in Columbia and Greene Counties, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed trends and characteristics with respect to the College's programs, services, personnel, facilities, and other resources.

Students

By any measure, COVID-19 upended higher education. Many employers desperate for workers now recruit in the high schools, offering the lure of signing bonuses and lucrative salaries. This phenomenon has called into question the value of higher education. In fact, the share of Americans who believe colleges and universities have a positive impact on the country has dropped by 14 percentage points since 2020.[2]

Among those who do enroll, a substantial number of students enter Columbia-Greene unprepared for college work and must complete transitional math and English, a phenomenon common to community colleges across the nation. Transitional non-credit bearing classes, however, are a barrier for many students who become discouraged and drop out before earning a degree or a certificate. Nearly 50 percent of Columbia-Greene students enroll part time, and even full-time students frequently take fewer than 15 credits per semester, thereby extending the time to earn a degree well beyond two years after enrolling.

The Institution

In spite of the tumult unleashed by the pandemic, Columbia-Greene forged ahead, embracing transformations that are making – and will be making – a significant impact on the College's learning and working environment. Heading the list are three major changes in technology: migrating from an outdated Student Information System to Banner; converting from the Blackboard learning platform to Desire2Learn's Brightspace; and installing an upgraded telecommunications infrastructure.

Other significant undertakings include advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through meaningful and dynamic programs; unveiling academic enhancements that include new micro-credentials and expanded program concentrations; growing the partnership with Hudson Link to include the Green Haven Correctional Facility; and offering a certificate in Construction Technology / Preservation Carpentry, a unique opportunity for students to become skilled in the building industry.

[2] NPR, July 26, 2022

In Summer 2021, the College debuted a three-screen Use of Force Decision Making Simulator Room. Not only do Criminal Justice students benefit from this space, but also law enforcement agencies from the Twin Counties and beyond are using the simulator to hone de-escalation skills. In addition, the College launched a Police Basic Training Program in Summer 2022 that will put more law enforcement officers in the pipeline.

In January 2021, Achieving the Dream, a prestigious national organization that "champions hard-working community college leaders . . . who choose transformation over tradition, curiosity over inaction, and innovation over status quo", selected Columbia-Greene to participate in the *Building Resiliency in Rural Community Colleges for the Future of Work* cohort. Columbia-Greene also became part of SUNY's Guided Pathways cohort, an initiative that aligns with Achieving the Dream. With these affiliations, the College already has launched new strategies to provide more effective, timely, integrated, and efficient services for students that will transform their educational experience at Columbia-Greene.

CHANGE MATTERS

CHANGE MATTERS

On the following pages, Columbia-Greene Community College proudly shares *Change Matters*, its strategic plan for 2022 – 2025. Ideas from numerous members of the College community, and the local, state, and national agendas that have made college completion and student success paramount priorities for all colleges and universities, inform the goals and objectives of this plan. *Change Matters* builds on and evolves from previous strategic plans.

Working together, the College will underscore its commitment to the spirit and intent of the five strategic goals, recognizing they lay a firm foundation for excellence, change, and meeting the expectations of multiple stakeholders, both internal and external to Columbia-Greene. Every six months, the Columbia-Greene community will review and document the progress being made and develop action plans as needed for moving forward.

Strategic Goals and Objectives
2022 – 2025

STUDENT SUCCESS

Goal

Provide all students with a holistic educational experience that supports persistence, retention, and goal completion.

Objectives

- Provide an accessible and supportive environment for all students, from inquiry to goal completion.

- Develop a cohesive framework of student support services that enable all students to progress toward their educational and career goals.

- Assess the effectiveness of high impact practices, co-curricular programs, and activities on an annual basis.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Goal

Annually analyze and develop academic offerings that respond to diverse student needs and meet local market demands.

Objectives

- Evaluate two academic programs per year to determine their viability and to identify strategies for improving their quality and marketability.

- Launch at least one new micro-credential or academic program each academic year for the next three years.

- Ensure that all courses and programs align with institutional learning outcomes.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Goal

Increase the level of commitment to be a more culturally competent and responsive institution that acknowledges, respects, and celebrates identity, background, and idea expression.

Objectives

- Ensure policies and practices are in place to achieve equitable outcomes.

- Create an environment where everyone feels safe reporting bias.

- Further develop programming that promotes and celebrates equity, diversion, inclusion, and belonging.

ENROLLMENT

Goal

Increase the College's overall enrollment by an annual average of five percent over the three years of the plan by expanding marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts to attain a more diverse student body.

Objectives

- Strengthen and expand marketing and communication efforts to find new pipelines of students and attract a more diverse student body.

- Identify student needs, implement programs that empower, and allocate resources that contribute to student persistence and retention beginning at the time of application and continuing through completion.

TECHNICAL AND COMPUTING ENVIRONMENT

Goal

Leverage technology to improve operating efficiency and provide resources to support a first-rate experience.

Objectives

- Maintain modern and robust technical systems and infrastructure.

- Enhance existing campus services and implement new technologies that support academic and operational needs.

- Protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and systems.

Implementation

Each Columbia-Greene department will plan its activities and make budget recommendations to support the College's strategic goals and objectives. Administrators, faculty, and staff should work collaboratively to build on complementary strengths and to minimize duplication or overlap.

While *Change Matters* identifies objectives that will, in all likelihood, remain important through the cycle of the plan, new objectives may emerge as well. Thus, Columbia-Greene expects that, over time, additional objectives will become important. They will be identified through program reviews, planning, and budgeting; continuing work with external constituencies; ongoing assessments of student learning outcomes; evaluations of programs and services; and the impact of state and federal legislation, reporting requirements, and funding opportunities.

All departments will provide information about strategic goal implementation on a regular basis to the Strategic Planning Committee.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Additional information about Columbia-Greene Community College is available on the College's website (sunycgcc.edu); in a number of publications including the College Catalog, *President's Report to the Community*, and brochures; and on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). For more information, call the Director of Marketing at 518.697.6377.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Columbia-Greene Community College provides, at a minimum, the following educational programs and services:

• General education for students planning to transfer to a four-year college or university and/or to earn an associate's degree in the arts and humanities.

• Career and technical education to provide students with career training suitable for obtaining employment or enhancing occupational skills.

• General or transitional studies for students requiring additional preparation before beginning college-level education.

• Library for study, myriad print and electronic resources, and research consultations.

• Continuing education and professional development for residents, employers, and employees in the communities served who desire non-credit opportunities.

• Public service activities to meet specialized needs of the community such as workshops, seminars, and customized employee training programs offered on- or off-campus.

• Student services including advising, counseling, testing, and tutoring as well as resources for career success, health and wellness, Veterans, and students with disabilities.

• Day Care Center for children aged three to five.

**COLUMBIA
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COLLEGE

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