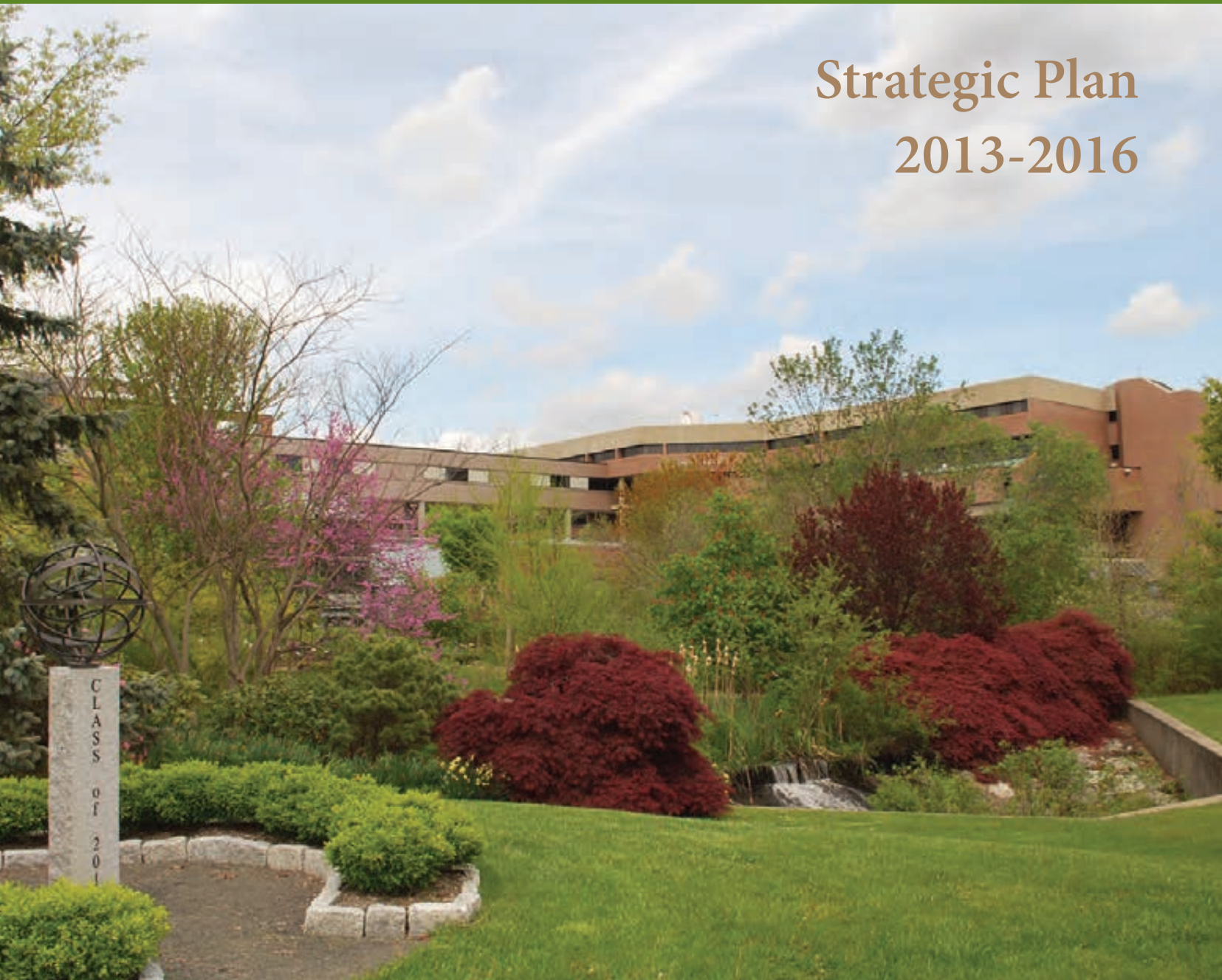




TOWARD A SPLENDID COLLEGE

Strategic Plan
2013-2016



NVCC MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

Naugatuck Valley Community College offers quality, affordable education and training in response to evolving community needs by providing opportunities to individuals and organizations to develop their potential.

VISION

At NVCC, the word “community” is central and our students are considered our most sacred trust and our finest asset. Collaboration within and outside the confines of our immediate surroundings defines our actions and is the base for the rich intellectual, educational, cultural and civic-minded experiences we provide our students.

“We concur with the judgment of the visiting team that the College is operating in a deliberative and strategic manner with a high degree of self-discipline and self-understanding and that the institution's mission and vision together provide the focus for its ‘Toward a Splendid College’ strategic plan.”

From the May 3, 2013 letter announcing NVCC re-accreditation:
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.

To view the NVCC 2013-16 Strategic Plan electronically, please visit nv.edu/strategic.



TOWARD A SPLENDID COLLEGE

Strategic Plan 2013–2016

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Working Together

We shape our self
to fit this world

and by the world
are shaped again.

The visible
and the invisible

working together
in common cause,

to produce
the miraculous.

I am thinking of the way
the intangible air

passed at speed
round a shaped wing

easily
holds our weight.

So may we, in this life
trust

to those elements
we have yet to see

or imagine,
and look for the true

shape of our own self,
by forming it well

to the great
intangibles about us.

– David Whyte
from *Teaching with Fire*



NVCC Faculty and Staff
"We're Here For You!"



To Our NVCC Family:

Writing these words invites reflection on the past three years and the contemplation of changes that the next three years will bring our beloved Naugatuck Valley Community College.

Three years ago we set out on a course to focus our energies, efforts, resources and initiatives on supporting our students through degree completion. We reached out to community, understanding that the college's future is intrinsically linked to the future of the people in the communities we serve. The results of these past three years speak to significant and long-lasting impact on many lives.

The next three years will build on the achievements of our 2010–2013 strategic initiatives by deepening the strategies that support our students: from their pre-collegiate and developmental needs, to their completion, transfer, and job aspirations. We will seek ways to strengthen our advisement, mentoring, and service learning strategies. And of course, we will continue to build bridges and collaboration with public education and community organizations as we enhance our presence in a growing number of service towns.

Given that the new 2013–16 plan largely represents an enhancement of many initiatives and anticipated outcomes of our 2010–13 plan and that we have kept the same five overarching goals, the title of this new plan remains “Toward a Splendid College.” This title not only helps demonstrate continuity from the last plan to this one, but also serves as a reminder that our highest aspirations take time to achieve.

In the drafting of these documents, we counted on and benefited from the creativity and the academic rigor of many. We invited participation of stakeholders within and outside the confines of our institution and also incorporated imperatives and requirements set by our accrediting bodies and by the State of Connecticut. Our dreams for a better tomorrow for our students are supported by our experience and expertise, and by input from business and industry and community organizations in the service region.

In the poem I include here, the term “working together” underscores our purpose and our plan. Working together on our last strategic plan brought at times surprising and highly rewarding outcomes as well as new opportunities we had not dared to dream about at the time. Our Bridge to College Office and the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center come to mind. For NVCC, working together means that we are open to possibilities that would not have occurred, had it not been by the generous collaboration and creative energies of trusting and respectful partners. Yes, it is true, as I often quote “It Is I Who Must Begin,” but it becomes so much more powerful when we come together to ensure that only our very best efforts are put forward.

The significant changes in the number of students completing degrees these past three years can only be surpassed by having this powerful trend continue. As we move forward, we, the people, will ensure a much better future for all those who put in us their trust and faith for a better tomorrow.

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
President, NVCC
September 2013

NVCC-A REGIONAL FORCE IN EDUCATION AND BEYOND

When you think of college, what kind of institution comes to mind?

In our experience, most people think of an ivy-covered four-year institution. It's rare that this question conjures up an image of a community college.

Yet, the 1,132 accredited community colleges in the U.S. enroll 44% of all domestic undergraduates. About half of all students at four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. attend community colleges prior to earning their degrees.^[1] In recent years that has translated into an annual community college enrollment of about 8 million students in credit programs and another 5 million for non-credit courses.^[2]

Community colleges do more than provide higher education. They serve as engines of workforce development, as well as trainers for many in high-demand career areas. Indeed, community colleges train more than 50 percent of nurses and other health care workers and certify about 80 percent of first responders in the U.S. (emergency medical technicians, firefighters, police officers).^[3]

At NVCC, we understand that we play multiple roles—first and foremost as a higher education provider, but also as a community partner in workforce development, and a place where students come to get the education and training to secure jobs in their career areas of interest. It was with an acute sense of awareness of the need to balance these roles that we developed and implemented our 2010–13 Strategic Plan. We did so during turbulent times, as unemployment rates soared in our region, and amidst some significant budget cuts to Connecticut community colleges. In spite of these circumstances, we achieved some impressive results.

- NVCC more than doubled our awards of degrees and certificates—NVCC is the first community college in Connecticut to have awarded more than 1,000 degrees and certificates in a year (for two years in a row).
- NVCC is gaining ground on retention—our retention rate of 60% is at par with the Connecticut community colleges and the national community college average.
- NVCC graduates get jobs. A recent survey shows that about 78% of our graduating class is employed one year after graduation.

But to be truly “splendid,” our work is far from over. What is presented in the following pages represents a plan that builds on the previous plan, maintaining the well-tested framework of five goals to serve as grounding forces in all that we do. Each goal then includes three initiatives, many of which got started or built momentum under our 2010–13 Strategic Plan. These goals and corresponding initiatives will drive activities on campus, focusing where in the higher education educational continuum—from pre-collegiate to program completion, graduation, employment, and transfer—we think we can leverage significant impact to improve the 10 college-wide outcomes we will collectively strive for by 2016. Most importantly, they represent our efforts to even more fully realize our potential as a regional force in education and beyond.

“In the coming years, jobs requiring at least an associate degree are projected to grow twice as fast as jobs requiring no college experience. We will not fill those jobs—or keep those jobs on our shores—without the training offered by community colleges.”

-President Barack Obama
Building American Skills Through Community Colleges
whitehouse.gov

¹ American Association of Community Colleges 2012 Fact Sheet.

² *Ibid.*

³ College Board Center for Innovative Thought. *Winning the Skills Race and Strengthening America's Middle Class: An Action Agenda for Community Colleges.* January 2008, p. 16.



NVCC STRATEGIC PLAN 2013–16 OVERVIEW

5 ConnSCU Goals (Connecticut State Colleges & Universities)

1. **A Successful First Year:** Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college.
2. **Student Success:** Graduate more students with the knowledge and skills to achieve their life and career goals.
3. **Affordability and Sustainability:** Maximize access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable.
4. **Innovation and Economic Growth:** Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast-changing world.
5. **Equity:** Eliminate achievement disparities among different ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups.

5 NVCC Goals and 15 Initiatives

Goal I: At NVCC, students achieve their goals.

1. Deepen the college-wide advising program.
2. Assess and fine-tune first year learning communities.
3. Redesign remedial and developmental course offerings.

Goal II: NVCC faculty and staff make a difference—at the college, in the community, in their fields of study, and in the lives of students.

4. Expand faculty and staff development.
5. Deepen volunteerism, mentoring, and service learning.
6. Improve equity and outcomes for underrepresented groups.

Goal III: NVCC programs meet and beat academic and industry standards.

7. Strengthen liberal arts, general education, and transfer.
8. Improve job placement efforts.
9. Incorporate 21st century technology inside and outside the classroom.

Goal IV: NVCC is an engine of change within Waterbury and the broader community.

10. Build partnerships and community presence in Waterbury, Danbury, Naugatuck and the broader service region.
11. Enhance pre-collegiate pathways to higher education.
12. Build workforce pathways in high-demand careers.

Goal V: NVCC is an effective, performance-based institution.

13. Fashion a comprehensive development and communications strategy.
14. Link data to decision-making for greater institutional effectiveness.
15. Build campus infrastructure and access.

10 Outcomes by 2016

1. FTE enrollment will increase by 10%.
2. Retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen will increase by 10%, bringing NVCC closer to the top tier nationally for community college retention.
3. Graduation rate will increase by 57%, achieving the community college national average.
4. Graduation rate for underrepresented students will increase by 75%.
5. Increase the total number of degrees and credit certificates by 57% and non-credit certificates by 15%.
6. Job placement rate of completers within a year after graduation will increase by 10%.
7. 90% of completers of degrees or certificates in high-demand career areas will have secured a job relevant to their study or will have transferred to another higher education program within a year.
8. Annual transfer headcount to four-year colleges will increase by 25%.
9. Current and future community and employer partnerships will become models for best practices and impact.
10. External funding portfolio for campus-driven initiatives will increase by 25%.

UNDERLYING ELEMENTS

NVCC Mission

Naugatuck Valley Community College offers quality, affordable education and training in response to evolving community needs by providing opportunities to individuals and organizations to develop their potential.

NVCC Vision

At NVCC, the word “community” is central and our students are considered our most sacred trust and finest asset. Collaboration within and outside the confines of our immediate surroundings defines our actions and is the base for the rich intellectual, educational, cultural and civic-minded experiences we provide our students.

NVCC Values

- 1. Student Centeredness.** All that we do—from planning to execution and assessment of initiatives—supports student learning and other student needs.
- 2. Academic Rigor.** We set high academic standards for our students and ourselves. We provide the support necessary and model the academic rigor for students to achieve their goals.
- 3. Leadership.** Leadership comes with each member of the community and at every level. Leaders embrace the vision, guide the mission, and model ways to ensure that all NVCC constituents have the knowledge, skills, and experiences to achieve their personal and professional goals.
- 4. Accountability.** We believe in mutual accountability—students to faculty and staff, and faculty and staff to students—to build consensus on what needs to be done, provide the resources and support to get the work done, measure our results and transparently share what we have accomplished, and acknowledge and reward good work.
- 5. Respect.** We respect and affirm the dignity and worth of all individuals and foster a supportive community exemplified by our commitment to inclusiveness, civility, compassion, and kindness.
- 6. Trust.** Our bond is our trust in each other to do every day what is best for our students, for our alumni, for our fellow workers, for our donors, for employers, for pre-collegiate students, for transfer institutions, and for Connecticut citizens.
- 7. Effective Communications.** We personally commit to open dialogue and keeping current on important matters that cut across all levels of the college.
- 8. Human Diversity.** We value diversity among our students, employees, and community partners, knowing how differences in perspectives, experiences, and abilities contribute to the rich fabric of the college and the ability to achieve its mission.
- 9. Community Outreach and Civic Engagement.** We engage our service region through extensive community outreach and civic engagement, welcoming all stakeholders to the table during the planning and assessment processes and promoting volunteerism and partnerships that advance critical community services and needs.
- 10. Beautiful and Positive Ideas.** We believe beautiful ideas often come from unlikely places, and when they are proposed and supported, they bring added life to the campus and foster student success.



PLANNING METHODOLOGY

More than 800 faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community leaders contributed to the creation of this plan.

We undertook a planning methodology similar to our approach to the 2010–13 Strategic Plan with some fine-tuning.

We replicated strategies to gather qualitative data from a wide variety of audiences, while strengthening methods to engage internal and external constituencies more deeply. This meant more focus groups and one-to-one interviews with even more targeted questions, testing ideas and soliciting new ones that would help us frame the direction of the 2013–16 Strategic Plan.

We undertook intensive analysis of quantitative data, reviewing findings from the recent NEASC accreditation visit, and discussing our progress toward achieving the outcomes we strove for in our 2010–13 Strategic Plan.

The product of this rigorous process—this 2013–16 Strategic Plan—represents a roadmap for the college grounded in evidence of what works, what needs refinement, and where we most need to focus to strengthen student success.

2013–16 Planning Activities September 2012–June 2013

- Facilitated focus groups (38 total) were held with 310 participants from all constituencies.
- Faculty and staff comprised 250 of the 310 total focus group participants.
- The student survey had 85 student respondents.
- The all-college faculty and staff survey had 440 respondents.
- Nine community leaders from education, government, business, and community organizations were interviewed individually.
- The fourth annual community meeting in 2013 engaged 100 leaders from the 22-town service region and 20 NVCC faculty, staff and students to discuss partnerships related to the strategic plan.
- 20-plus NVCC meetings (Cabinet, Institutional Planning Committee, Administrative Council, All-College) were held to discuss among other topics:
 - progress toward achieving goals, initiatives, and outcomes of last plan.
 - new opportunities and challenges, as well as strengths and needed areas of improvement.
 - NEASC Evaluation Team findings.
 - regional education and employment trends.
 - findings from surveys and interviews.
 - creation and final selection of goals, initiatives, and outcomes.

NVCC HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Institutional Profile

Naugatuck Valley Community College resulted from the merger in 1992 of Mattatuck Community College and Waterbury State Technical College through legislation enacted by the Connecticut General Assembly. Conveniently located at the crossroads of State Highway 8 and Interstate 84, the college is accessible by public transportation and serves over 22 towns and cities in the west central part of Connecticut.

Since the start of the 2010–2013 strategic plan, NVCC's FTE enrollment has increased by 10% (Fall 2009 to Fall 2012), maintaining the college's #2 position in FTE enrollment among the state's community colleges. NVCC is comprehensive in its offerings of over 100 associate degree and credit certificate programs. In addition, the college offers non-credit courses and certification programs in 14 job-related areas, often customized to fulfill industry specific training, job skills upgrading, and personal enrichment interests. The non-credit unduplicated headcount was 2,214 for the 2011–2012 calendar year. Continuing education students enrolled in workforce development programs predominantly in the areas of business, manufacturing and health.

NVCC prepares students for transfer to other institutions and the world of work. A strong core of general education gives students a broad background to change or modify career direction or to transfer to other institutions. For those who come to the college unprepared for its rigors, a developmental skills program helps them succeed. The college offers support in mathematics, reading, and writing and provides students with supportive services in counseling, tutoring, testing, and individualized assistance in the newly created Academic Center for Excellence. Additional services include advising, financial aid, disabilities services, peer tutoring, services for veterans and a Veterans Oasis room, minority student services, a bookstore, student government, and other student organizations.

Student Profile

The spring 2013 unduplicated head count at NVCC was 7,007 students. The most recent data reported 58% female and 42% male enrollments. The average age was 26 years with about 43% of students between 18 and 21 years of age. They attended full-time (32%) and part-time (68%). White (57%), Black (9%), Hispanic (22%), Asian (3%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.2%), Multiple Races (4%), and Unknown or Other (51%) comprised the college's ethnic distribution. The number of first-time, full-time (FTFT) students eligible for Pell grants increased 35% from fall 2009 to fall 2011. Half of the students entering in fall 2011 were Pell eligible.

General studies, liberal arts, and business management were the top enrolled programs. Students came primarily from Waterbury, Naugatuck, Danbury, Watertown, and Wolcott. Many NVCC students need financial support to attend. For the 2011–2012 academic year, 5,067 students received financial aid totaling \$13,795,310 (paid out). Approximately 80% of entering students lack college-level skills and must enroll in developmental classes in math, writing, and reading to prepare them for their courses.

Faculty / Staff Profile

NVCC has 107 full-time credit and over 315 part-time credit faculty positions, 35 part-time non-credit instructors, 36 part-time clinical faculty, and 170 full-time staff members. Nineteen percent of current full-time faculty hold doctoral degrees and 76% hold masters degrees.

Service Region Profile

The college's primary service region includes 22 towns. Waterbury, with a population of over 110,000, and Danbury with a population of over 65,500 are considered the anchor cities in the region flanked by small rural and suburban communities. Once a thriving manufacturing area, the greater Waterbury labor market was once home to brass, tire, spring, metalworking, and defense-related industries. Waterbury was known then as the "Brass City of the World," but over time, foreign competition, low market demand and other factors affected area jobs and the economy.

Today's Waterbury has adapted to an economy supported by technology related ventures, health care occupations largely sustained by two hospitals, numerous retail employers, and smaller manufacturing firms characterized by their use of modern technologies. Though such adaptation is promising, Waterbury still faces the challenges of many other urban centers: high poverty levels, low academic achievement, and unemployment.

Job creation, worker retention, company survival and business growth are critical factors in the economic and social future of Waterbury and its surrounding towns. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, as of April 2013, the Danbury labor market area has experienced a 71.2% unemployment recovery rate (compared to the pre-2007 recession numbers), unlike the Waterbury labor market that has seen only a 15.9% gain. As noted in the 2012–17 Strategic Plan of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB), which serves 41 municipalities, including virtually all of the 22 towns served by NVCC, a disturbing number of high school students in the NRWIB region dropped out in the 2008–2009 school year. In 15 towns in the region, less than 35% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher. Clearly, education and job training are essential ingredients for a recovering economy and successful future. This strategic plan addresses NVCC's partnering roles in that recovery and future.

Note: Data used in these profiles and this plan are always the most current available and, therefore, do not always reflect the same time period.



GOAL 1: AT NVCC, STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.

Ensuring student success is the heart of what we do. And, it is complicated because it means different things to different students, depending on why he or she comes to NVCC: whether to secure a job, improve employment credentials, or to transfer and continue with education.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three initiatives that will help students stay on track as they pursue whatever they aspire for by coming to NVCC. These initiatives will build academic readiness for college, improve first-year student success, and guide students as they navigate their NVCC college experience.

1. Deepen the College-Wide Advising Program

Fewer college students today can afford the time to “find themselves” in college. Today’s students must be more laser-focused on picking a career and then determining the quickest, most-affordable route to get there. Academic advisement helps students develop one-to-one relationships with college representatives who can guide them through their college experience to achieve their academic and career goals. While advising approaches vary from campus to campus, national research shows that academic advisement can improve community college persistence, retention, and graduation rates.^[4]

Now all NVCC students (full-time, part-time, matriculated, non-matriculated) are assigned advisors to help them orient to the college, prepare to register, and determine appropriate courses to take. By 2016, we will improve key aspects of academic advising, including our capacity to engage students at critical stages, so that they can embark successfully along academic pathways that keep their long-term goals in sight.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Improve student understanding of the importance of advising to retention and graduation.

⁴ Ensign, R. “Fast Gainers: 4 Ways That Colleges Have Raised Graduation Rates.” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, 2010; *What Works in Retention? Community Colleges Report*, 4th Nat’l ACT Survey, 2010; Bahr, P., “Cooling Out in the Community College: What is the Effect of Academic Advising on Students’ Chances of Success?” *Research in Higher Ed*, 2008.

- Strengthen faculty and staff training in advising so they better understand their roles, different methods, when advising is critical (early warning intervention sooner), and new program requirements to communicate with students.
- Establish an advisor-designed plan to strengthen first-year student advisement, implementing cross-functionally trained teams of advisors (faculty, staff, tutors, and peers) that include advisors connected to student majors.
- Reinforce advising at other critical points, particularly as applicable to part-time students, e.g., when students are undecided, changing majors, or approaching graduation.
- Integrate more technology into advising, from the creation of online advising systems to purchasing a program that can support group texting and peer-to-peer texting.

2. Assess and Fine-Tune First Year Learning Communities

College, especially a non-residential one, can feel overwhelming and isolating for many students, particularly in their first year. Learning communities offer an effective educational approach where students learn and undertake activities in cohorts, thereby creating a system of mutual support that impacts their performance, engagement and retention.^[5] Identified as a “high impact practice” by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, learning communities also promote greater curricular coherence by strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty.^[6]

NVCC piloted learning communities with first-time, full-time freshmen in fall 2012. Based on preliminary indicators of success, in fall 2013 we expanded the program to 11 learning communities. By 2016, we want all first-time,

⁵ Tinto, V. *Learning Better Together: The Impact of Learning Communities on Student Success*. In *Promoting Student Success in College*, Higher Education Monograph Series (pp. 1-8). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2003

⁶ Lardner, Emily, and Gillies Malnarich. *New Era in Learning-Community Work: Why The Pedagogy of Intentional Integration Matters*. *Change Magazine*, July-August 2008



full-time freshmen to have the opportunity to participate in learning communities, laying the foundation for long-term academic success.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Offer 25 learning communities by end of Year Three, serving the majority of first-time, full-time freshmen.
- Strengthen various critical aspects of the curriculum through the program review and assessment processes (e.g., capstone experiences, internships, advisory councils).
- Provide professional development for faculty to focus on student engagement and learning.

3. Redesign Remedial and Developmental Course Offerings

Today about 60% of first-year college students require some level of remedial or developmental education. At two-year colleges, about 75% of incoming students need remedial support in English, mathematics, or both.^[7] Our nation can meet its ambitious college completion goals only if students who start in developmental education succeed. In August 2012, Governor Dannel Malloy signed a new state law, P.A. 12-40, An Act Concerning College Readiness and Completion. This law requires the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities, beginning by the 2014 fall semester, to offer certain students remedial support embedded with corresponding entry-level courses, and certain other students an intensive college-readiness program.

As NVCC works to fully comply with the letter and spirit of the law, we will implement new procedures to ensure that students are spending their time and money earning college credits that help them graduate. Based on impressive research findings surrounding acceleration models, by 2016, NVCC will pilot fast-track courses,

modularize instruction, and mainstream students into college-level classes, transforming the way our students learn and engage.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Provide diagnostic software for students to prepare for the college placement test.
- Pilot self-paced modularized math instruction, allowing students to quickly transition from remedial to college-level courses.
- Embed tutors within fast-track, self-paced, and intensive math courses.
- Provide professional development for faculty teaching developmental and gateway courses.

Indicators of Success for Initiatives within Goal 1

1. Advising

- Students connect to advisors sooner and declare majors faster
- Fewer students on probation

2. Learning Communities

- Increased student success (beyond national averages) among students enrolled in Learning Communities

3. Remedial/Developmental Education

- Faster exit from remedial/developmental course sequences
- Higher rates of completion among these students

⁷ *Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy*, A Special Report by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and The Southern Regional Education Board, June 2010.

GOAL 2: NVCC FACULTY AND STAFF MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Cultivating the academic gravitas, administrative effectiveness, student engagement, and community involvement of our faculty and staff makes NVCC a stronger institution.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three initiatives that encourage and recognize the leadership of professionals in meeting the many needs of our diverse constituencies, on and off campus.

1. Expand Faculty and Staff Development

Educators and administrators in higher education today experience somewhat of a double bind. Colleges must operate on extremely tight budgets, with fewer faculty and staff to share management responsibilities inside and outside the classroom. At the same time, as higher education becomes more rigorously data-driven and results-oriented, faculty and staff must devote more attention to ensuring that methods remain state-of-the-art.^[8]

This initiative will offer professional development for faculty and staff, exposing them to a variety of training opportunities—from academic advisement and customer service, to performance-based decision-making. We will also explore ways to strengthen recognition of faculty and staff leadership in their fields, college, and community. By 2016, our hope is to provide all faculty and staff with opportunities to participate, so that we can even better model for our students the value of lifelong learning and always aspire to become better at what we do.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Survey all NVCC units to determine the training needs that will support the college's strategic goals.
- Create a faculty and staff development and recognition plan that incorporates the Center for Teaching, union-funded professional development, and other providers.

⁸Killion, J. *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development*. National Staff Development Council, 2008.

- Seek external funding to support the high-cost elements of the faculty and staff development plan.
- Develop assessment methods that track participation and outcomes.

2. Deepen Volunteerism, Mentoring, and Service Learning

Many colleges are exploring ways to strengthen civic engagement among students, faculty and staff. The reasons are both *philosophical* (that higher education has a significant role to play in building an engaged citizenry that supports a more vibrant democracy) and *pragmatic* (that these experiential learning opportunities can yield positive student learning and employment outcomes for students).^[9]

NVCC already has an active student body and engaged faculty and staff, with more than 39 student clubs and student-centered organizations, and more than 100 faculty, staff, and students participating in campus- and community-based volunteer and mentoring activities. In recent years, the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division pioneered theme-based service learning in which more than 53 students have worked on course-related community service opportunities that they self-identified and designed. By 2016, NVCC will expand its civic engagement efforts, so that more students, faculty, and staff can benefit from these experiences on and off campus.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Reach out to the Student Government Association (SGA) to engage all student clubs in dialogue about ways that they can serve as campus and community activists and advocates.
- Connect faculty and staff with community residents via online lectures on topics of mutual interest.

⁹The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. 2012. *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.



- Expand the mentoring program to include more student, alumni, and community/industry mentors.
- Strengthen collaboration among AmeriCorps and academic divisions to create more volunteer activities and service learning opportunities for our students.
- Increase partnerships with community institutions, including sister schools to model the Brother to Brother and Sister to Sister mentoring programs that support students from underrepresented groups.

3. Improve Equity and Outcomes for Underrepresented Groups

Community colleges are primary entry points to higher education for many underrepresented groups. They enroll 44 % of African American, 45% of Asian or Pacific Islander, and 51% and 54%, respectively, of Hispanic and Native American undergraduates.^[10] They enroll 42% of first-generation college students.^[11] Bottom line, they represent more accessible and affordable postsecondary options for many, especially those from middle- to low-income families. And their accessibility parlays beyond learning. It also can help lift people, especially those born into poor families, out of poverty. Indeed, the effect can be dramatic, with some recent studies showing for those born into the poorest fifth of American families, a college degree gives them an 80% chance of bettering their economic status during their lifetimes.^[12]

A commitment to providing open access and opportunity for all underlies NVCC's mission and values. While our campus has grown more diverse in recent years, more focus is needed to boost representation among key racial and ethnic groups, as well as those who are economically disadvantaged. By 2016, this initiative will help ensure a more inclusive student body that represents the diverse demographics of our service region.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Expand outreach to students from underrepresented groups to increase awareness, engagement and participation in Bridge to College retention activities and programs.
- Establish an engagement plan based on student needs and interests. The plan will include activities (first-generation club, peer tutoring), outreach strategies, and student outcomes.
- Identify key community partners including the School District of Waterbury, New Opportunities, YMCA, Opportunities Industrialization Center, and Brass City Harvest to collaborate with the Bridge to College Office to engage students from underrepresented groups.

Indicators of Success for Initiatives within Goal 2

1. Faculty and Staff Development

- Faculty and staff participate more in professional development
- Evidence of skills improvements that correlate to student success

2. Volunteerism, Mentoring, Service Learning

- Faculty, staff, and students participate more
- Evidence of participation positively impacting teaching and learning, as well as student outcomes

3. Equity and Outcomes for Underrepresented Groups

- Increased representation within enrollment, retention, and graduation of students

¹⁰ American Association of Community Colleges 2012 Fact Sheet.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Economic Case for Higher Education, U.S. Treasury Department, 2012.

GOAL 3: NVCC PROGRAMS MEET AND BEAT ACADEMIC

In higher education it is not enough to have good programs. Colleges increasingly must demonstrate their competitive advantage to students, faculty and staff, potential employers, and community partners. That means being better at demonstrating value—as higher education providers helping students pursue their career dreams while offering very practical supports that facilitate their transfer and employment.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three initiatives that will help build NVCC's reputation for excellence from academic and industry perspectives.

1. Strengthen Liberal Arts, General Education, and Transfer

Many students seek out a community college to begin their higher educational journey. For minority, low-income, and older students, a community college is often an entry point to higher education and a place to increase their odds of socio-economic upward mobility.^[13] Yet, while community colleges understand the importance of laying the foundation for continued learning, ensuring student transfer is complicated, given the complex interests and needs of students, as well as the difficulties in tracking where they go.

Through this initiative, NVCC will implement efforts mandated by the Board of Regents (BOR) for the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities which approved a Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) in 2012 designed to facilitate the transfer of the state's community college students into their junior year at the state universities. By fall 2014, the successful implementation of the policy will significantly improve our current transfer pathways through the creation of a common general education core that allows students to transfer seamlessly to four-year institutions in the Connecticut system. In addition to complying with statewide education policy changes, by 2016 NVCC will review its Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum, to ensure that it offers an educational experience that encourages creativity, intelligence,

and adaptability and helps students understand their transfer options.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Map Transfer Articulation Program's Gen Ed Framework competencies/outcomes across all core courses.
- Review, adjust, and adopt TAP Gen Ed Framework competencies for NVCC's General Education core.
- Strengthen seamless articulations with state universities through support of BOR Pathways committees.
- Create pre-major pathways, which include 30–31 transferable gen ed credits common to all 17 ConnSCU institutions.
- Develop and implement outcomes assessment plans for all disciplines within the common core.

2. Improve Job Placement Efforts

Although unemployment rates have been improving nationally and in the region, the recession hit Northwest Connecticut hard and the regional recovery appears slow going.^[14] These circumstances, alongside changing expectations within industry regarding worker skills, make the job market more difficult to navigate for those who are both seeking and trying to hold onto a job.

NVCC recognizes it plays an important role in job placement. In fall 2011, NVCC opened the Job Placement Center (JPC) on its Waterbury campus. Since that time, 1,036 students signed into the JPC to benefit from its general career services, including its resume writing and interviewing workshops, job/career fairs, placement of students into cooperative education internships, and one-to-one assistance to connect students with job openings. By 2016, we will focus even more squarely on how we can help graduating students to secure quality, upwardly mobile jobs in their career areas of choice.

¹³ The Economic Case for Higher Education, U.S. Treasury Department, 2012.

¹⁴ Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan, 2012-2017.



AND INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Develop a comprehensive, college-wide plan to improve job placement.
- Build partnerships with businesses to better understand their needs and connect students with jobs.
- Strengthen the job placement offerings and services, expanding one-to-one student supports, workshops, and internships/cooperative education experiences that provide students with the latest job-search tools.
- Strengthen the JPC's job placement systems and results.

3. Incorporate 21st Century Technology Inside and Outside the Classroom

Many colleges are exploring technology as an educational delivery tool within the classroom, via distance learning efforts, Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), and the creation of smart classrooms. Colleges less often pursue technological innovation to strengthen academic learning supports and improve administrative decision-making and business practice. ^[15]

Through this initiative, NVCC will consider ways to better incorporate technology inside and outside of the classroom to improve student performance as well as institutional effectiveness. By 2016, we will: offer new online courses and identify ways to control the quality of online course offerings; reposition critical academic supports, such as our library, to better support student learning; and identify technological enhancements that can improve NVCC's capacity to collect, organize, and report out on data to support a stronger culture of evidence-based decision-making. [Note: this initiative cross-references with Goal 5, Initiative 2.]

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Certify all online courses; introduce quality control measures across offerings.

- Create new online courses and a fully online Associate Degree program in General Studies.
- Increase the number of smart classrooms.
- Undertake a needs assessment and review of promising technological approaches to library based learning supports in concert with the 2013 Library Program Review. Implement recommendations.
- Re-engineer data collection, access, organization, and reporting processes.

Indicators of Success For Initiatives within Goal 3

1. Liberal Arts, Gen Ed, Transfer

- All NVCC LA and Gen Ed courses transfer
- Increased Liberal Arts student transfer
- Guaranteed or priority admission, junior status granted to graduates going on to four-year universities

2. Job Placement

- More on-the-job training and employment in areas of study
- More matriculated students and graduates securing jobs
- Graduates employed and earning more, working in fields of study

3. Technology

- Better quality of online offerings
- More students accessing and noting learning outcomes associated with library and other learning supports
- Greater efficiencies/effectiveness in administrative decision-making

¹⁵ Mitchell, B. *The Other Side to Technology in Higher Education*. Huffington Post, 9/25/12

GOAL 4: NVCC IS AN ENGINE OF CHANGE WITHIN WATERBURY

NVCC's mission is grounded in its relationship with its service region—the big cities and small towns that surround it. When it leads or collaborates with its communities on issues from access to higher education to workforce development and employment growth, NVCC acts as a powerful force for regional transformation.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three partnership initiatives with communities to address our common interests and concerns.

1. Build Partnerships and Community Presence in Waterbury, Danbury, Naugatuck, and the Broader Service Region

One of NVCC's most widely noted successes in recent years is the establishment of evening bus service for Waterbury residents. College, city, and state leaders collaborated to bring this service that has affected the lives of thousands.^[16] Evening bus service means area residents can work in the late evening. NVCC students can now use bus UPasses to get to campus, enabling them to enroll in more classes and remain on campus longer to access our educational services and student activities. Since October 2011, evening bus rides taken by all riders city-wide total 360,000, and 21,400 evening bus rides were taken by UPass holders, among whom NVCC students were counted. Our bus service collaboration illustrates what can happen when college and community come together. Through 2016, we will continue to explore partnerships with the City of Waterbury, Danbury, Naugatuck, New Milford, and other cities and towns to increase our responsiveness to community needs.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Monitor evening bus service and student UPass ridership; advocate for state funding beyond 2014.
- Continue and expand numerous partnerships with the City of Waterbury and its Public School System.

¹⁶ *Historic Bus Ride Marks the Start of Evening Bus Service in Waterbury*, Waterbury Observer, 10/24/11, <http://www.waterburyobserver.org/node/570>.

- Working with state officials, obtain lease for new downtown Danbury Center site to accommodate rapid enrollment growth (up from 231 students at opening in 2009 to 919 students in 2013).
- Meet with Danbury, Naugatuck, and New Milford leaders to identify mutual interests and needs.
- Reach out to other mayors and municipal leaders to identify potential partnership opportunities.

2. Enhance Pre-Collegiate Pathways to Higher Education

As a nation, we know we need to better address college preparedness issues much earlier in a student's academic experience. We also need to more clearly delineate and articulate the requirements and credentials for different fields of study and employment, so that students can more successfully pursue post-secondary degrees and credentials, as well as careers.^[17]

In 2012, NVCC joined the City of Waterbury and became the fiduciary for GEAR UP (Gain Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a federally funded \$11.2 million, seven-year grant to help prepare middle and high school students for post-secondary education. NVCC's Bridge to College Office currently administers this grant along with others: Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program, Workforce Investment Act In-School Youth Program, Community College Scholars Program, AmeriCorps, and the College Access and Challenge Program. Through this initiative, NVCC advances these and other efforts to help Waterbury and surrounding communities improve student performance in high schools and middle schools, thereby improving student pathways to higher education.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Serve as the fiduciary and partner in administering the GEAR UP grant.

¹⁷ *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century*. Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, February 2011.



RBURY AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY.

- Incorporate Bridge to College into the fabric of NVCC and strengthen collaboration between programs, maximizing impact on students.
- Increase the number of high school graduates who are college ready.
- Explore state funding and partnerships with boards of education and area employers to establish a Middle College Science Academy at NVCC.

3. Build Workforce Pathways in High-Demand Careers

Workforce development partnerships between community colleges and industry are increasingly the norm and expectation. As business sectors seek more skilled workers, many are turning to community colleges to lend their expertise at serving local workforce training needs. And, training programs developed in partnership with industry tend to be more attractive to students, especially in this economy, where they can provide greater assurance of employment.^[18]

Through this initiative, NVCC will expand our recently established Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (AMTC), which, with funding support and via a curriculum developed jointly with local manufacturers, offers a blend of non-credit to credit award options to students in basic and advanced manufacturing skills. Given that non-credit courses often serve as first entry points for students who seek credentialing programs for new jobs or advanced skills in their current positions, we will explore additional non-credit to credit programs in allied health, business/computer skills, accounting, and other high-demand careers. We also will strengthen our internal processes to monitor area workforce needs so that we can adjust our curricula and design new degree programs or certificates for emerging careers.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Expand day and evening enrollment in AMTC and ensure equipment is state-of-the-art.
- Implement new allied health academic programs consistent with the Academic Plan.
- Provide incumbent worker training for employees of our manufacturing partners via the AMTC.
- Identify and implement additional non-credit to credit pathways and programs.
- Explore high-demand career pathways that build joint STEM programs between NVCC and four-year colleges.
- Undertake program reviews and assessments in coordination with industry associations and employers to keep NVCC programs current and connected with workforce needs and demands.

Indicators of Success For Initiatives within Goal 4

1. Community Partnerships

- Partnerships with common agenda in four to six cities/towns

2. Pre-collegiate Pathways

- Increase Bridge to College funding, student reach and impact
- Determine feasibility of establishing a Middle College

3. Responsive Pathways to Jobs

- Expand non-credit to credit options, like LPN to RN
- Strengthen responsiveness of programs to regional workforce needs
- Prepare more workers with multiple credentials

¹⁸Community College and Business Partnerships Take Root. Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Community College Advancement News, February 14, 2012.

GOAL 5: NVCC IS AN EFFECTIVE, PERFORMANCE-BASED I

NVCC embraces the higher education movement to become better at demonstrating effectiveness and performance, especially as it relates to student success.

To achieve this goal, we have identified three initiatives designed to improve NVCC's performance in three key areas of operation: fundraising, communication, and infrastructure.

1. Fashion a Comprehensive Development and Communications Strategy

With public funds diminishing, community colleges need to be smarter about how they fundraise and manage their investments. That means developing foundations, devising new fundraising and donor recognition approaches, and diversifying investments.^[19] It also means innovating new tactics, like social media, to tackle negative perceptions about community colleges, so that they become more highly regarded as institutions of choice for higher education.

The NVCC Foundation has reorganized itself for fundraising, with its enthusiastic and committed board. It has adopted a new mission (to raise funds for and increase awareness of the college) to align its activities with NVCC's goals and initiatives established in its strategic plan. The Foundation's new mission allows for an ambitious agenda for coming years: to build Foundation membership; to strengthen ties to alumni; to research lessons learned from peer institutions; and to expand the reach of annual campaigns, particularly among area employers. This initiative outlines campus-based fundraising and communications activities to support and augment their work.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Purchase a donor and grants management software package.

¹⁹ Community Colleges: *Insights on Fundraising and Endowment Strategies*, Wilmington Trust, 2013.

- Work with faculty to identify funding for department projects that enhance teaching and learning.
- Establish a President's Grants Planning Council to explore and prioritize major grants.
- Design a communications plan that uses data to show the value of community colleges.

2. Link Data to Decision-making for Greater Institutional Effectiveness

Higher education has experienced a cultural shift in its decision-making practices. Many funding initiatives, from the federal Race to the Top, to state formula funding, are increasingly basing their allocations on student completion and graduation.^[20] Higher education accrediting bodies are now requiring colleges to produce greater evidence of how data influences decision-making.^[21] As the country and the State of Connecticut look to community colleges to educate a competent and skilled workforce, these institutions must become more effective at documenting student success in more meaningful ways.

At NVCC, we must fortify our internal culture of data-informed decision making so that we can make wise choices about what improves student success. Through this initiative, we will build systems and internal communications strategies that provide faculty and staff with greater access to data as they plan, implement, and assess programs and initiatives. We will help faculty and staff understand how performance on student-centered outcomes impacts budgeting. As availability of data increases, so will the expectation that faculty and staff demonstrate use of it to identify areas of concern, make improvements and document progress linked to student success. [Note: this initiative cross-references with Goal 3, Initiative 3.]

²⁰ Race to the Top Fact Sheet, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/fact-sheet-race-top>; *Performance Funding for Higher Education*, National Conference of State Legislatures, February 2013, <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/educ/performance-funding.aspx>

²¹ NEASC Standard 2 (NVCC's accreditor), http://cihe.neasc.org/standards_policies/standards/standards_html_version



Activity Areas of Focus:

- Implement systems that improve NVCC’s information reporting capacity.
- Provide training in using the system’s reporting capabilities.
- Develop standardized reporting cycles and provide regular data snapshots, which analyze particular issues facing certain student groups and illustrate them with data from NVCC.
- Design internal communications approach that helps the campus community understand how data informs better decisions and improves our impact.
- Implement assessment measures and methods to better track progress across all strategic plan initiatives.

- Convert more general classrooms to computer classrooms and to smart classrooms.
- Complete Office of Civil Rights-mandated self-assessment of physical/program access, and obtain funds to make the required physical improvements in order to enhance access for all.
- Design and complete the campus-wide improvement project (includes sidewalk construction, repaving streets and parking lots, campus lighting improvements, campus East Entrance improvements).
- “Green” NVCC’s water and energy usage, waste disposal, and recycling, with student club involvement.

3. Build Campus Infrastructure and Access

Colleges need modern, functional facilities that support teaching and learning. Campuses must be inviting and safe for students, employees, and the community. Ensuring the physical plan basics (attractive grounds, accessible and clean facilities, ample parking, and transportation access) and infrastructure development that supports teaching and learning (personal and group study/congregating areas, state-of-the-art science, engineering, and computer laboratories) help extend that invitation. The trend across the country is also to “go green” – to be more conscious of our impact on the environment.

Through this initiative, NVCC will undertake improvement projects that address maintenance and upgrades as well as student and community access to college programs and services, including those required externally (e.g., ADA compliance). We also will advocate for continued evening bus service, and undertake efforts to reduce our environmental footprint.

Activity Areas of Focus:

- Design and renovate Founders Hall to house the new Center for Allied Health and a multi-purpose meeting facility to be used by the entire campus.

**Indicators of Success
For Initiatives within Goal 5**

1. Development and Communications

- Increased support from the NVCC Foundation
- Increased faculty driven grants
- Increased grant applications and awards
- Regional perceptions of community colleges in general and NVCC specifically will improve

2. Data-based Decision-Making

- Quicker response to data needs
- Greater evidence of data-informed decision-making

3. Campus Infrastructure and Access

- Facilities Master Plan implemented
- Decreased carbon footprint/increased energy efficiency
- Increased awareness of and engagement in “greening”

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

NVCC's Anticipated College-Wide Outcomes 2013-16

Over the next three years, NVCC will track progress along a number of initiative-related indicators of success, as outlined on the previous pages. We also anticipate some major college-wide improvements as a result of implementation of what we describe in this plan. Outcomes 1–8 represent aspirational outcomes related to the progression of students, from their enrollment at NVCC to securing either a job or successfully transferring to a four-year institution. Outcomes 9 and 10 focus upon the impact of NVCC partnerships and external funding for college initiatives, respectively.

By 2016...

<i>NVCC Outcome</i>	<i>Status as of Fall 2012</i>	<i>3-Year Target</i>
1. FTE enrollment will increase by 10%.	4,440 FTE's enrolled	4,884 FTE's enrolled
2. Retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen will increase by 10%, bringing NVCC closer to the top tier nationally for community college retention.	60% retention rate	66% retention rate
3. Graduation rate will increase by 57%, achieving the community college national average.	14% graduation rate	22% graduation rate
4. Graduation rate for underrepresented students will increase by 75%.	11% among underrepresented students	18% among underrepresented students
5. Increase the total number of degrees and credit certificates by 57% and non-credit certificates by 15%.	1,020 degrees and credit certificates 410 non-credit certificates	1,600 degrees and credit certificates 472 non-credit certificates
6. Job placement rate of completers within a year after graduation will increase by 10%.	78% of graduating students employed	85% of graduating students employed
7. 90% of completers of degrees or credit certificates in high-demand career areas will have secured a job relevant to their study or will have transferred to another higher education program within a year.	80% among graduating students in high-demand career areas	90% among graduating students in high-demand career areas
8. Annual transfer headcount to four-year colleges will increase by 25%.	87 transfer students	109 transfer students
9. Current and future community and employer partnerships will become models for best practices and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEAR UP Partnership • Advanced Mfg. Tech. Center • Evening Bus Service 	Showcase partnerships as national models
10. External funding portfolio for campus-driven initiatives will increase by 25%.	\$3.80 million	\$4.75 million



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Plans must inspire us to do better. But they also require clear pathways to accomplish them, and mechanisms by which to assess success. The following describes how NVCC will implement this plan.

Plan Implementation Structures

In 2008, NVCC's President created an Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) to connect all college-wide planning processes to outcomes assessment, program review, accreditation requirements, and the college's strategic plan. The mission of the IPC is to create and normalize ongoing planning processes that ensure quality of programs, effective use of resources, and student success. Chaired by the President of the College, the IPC includes a steering committee and four working committees that include diverse representation of faculty and staff.

The four working committees of NVCC's IPC, led by members of the President's management team, and that correspond with the strategic plan goal areas, will oversee implementation of goal area activities and assess progress toward achieving success.

- *Responsive Academic Leadership and Programs Committee:* Goals 2 and 3, chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs
- *Student Success Committee:* Goal 1, chaired by the Dean of Student Services
- *Institutional Effectiveness Committee:* Goals 4 and 5, chaired by the Provost and Senior Dean of Administration
- *Environmental Scanning Committee:* Goals 1–5, co-chaired by the Associate Dean of Information Technology, the Dean of Community Engagement, and the Director of Institutional Advancement.

Operational Planning and Assessment

Each year NVCC will develop an operational plan that outlines the specific activities the college will undertake within each initiative area outlined in this plan. In late spring/summer, the Cabinet, in consultation with faculty and staff within their divisions, will develop draft operational plans for the upcoming year. In September, the Cabinet will present their draft operational plans to the IPC for discussion and comment. In October, draft operational plans will be disseminated campus-wide for discussion and comment, after which the President will approve the operational plan for the year.

During each academic year, the IPC will lead efforts to assess progress according to the plan on two fronts—the strategic initiative indicators of success and the overarching institutional outcomes.

- The *strategic initiative indicators of success* help answer the question: What's different after three years as a specific result of the initiatives? These indicators identify results that can be attributed directly to the scope of work outlined for each strategic initiative.
- The *institutional outcomes* represent overarching indicators of success for NVCC. All of the work in this plan will contribute to these outcomes by 2016.

Assessment will take place at the midpoint and end of each academic year. Based on review of findings, the President and Cabinet will make adjustments as necessary, with input and recommendations from the IPC.

CONCLUSION

The dream and the vision established in our 2010–2013 Strategic Plan live on in our continuing journey for 2013–2016. The journey is grounded by our beliefs that we must continue to strive to be better, move beyond ourselves, and work together to the best of our abilities to make significant and positive changes in the lives of our students.

Pablo Neruda's Nobel Laureate speech captures the root of our aspirations, an understanding that we are part of a larger whole and that we must embrace it:

*All paths lead to the same goal;
to convey to others what we are...*

*but in this dance or in this song,
there are fulfilled the most ancient rites*

*of our conscience in the awareness
of being human and of believing in*

a common destiny.

This strategic plan, a continuation of the work begun in 2010, presents a road map for continued growth and improvement. It speaks of an undertaking that is both a labor of love and a workforce imperative. More than ever, we at Naugatuck Valley Community College embrace our roles as a vehicle for the education of our students, as an engine for transformation of lives and communities. This, our very own Strategic Plan for 2013–2016, is the product of the wisdom and the engagement of a collective of dedicated professionals whose experience and wisdom has been enhanced by the generous contributions of multiple stakeholders. It is a living document and as such open to new possibilities as well, reflective of our belief in and our commitment to a better tomorrow.





NVCC Community Meeting: "Partnerships for Progress"
June, 2013



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student centeredness • academic rigor • leadership • accountability

respect • trust • effective communications

human diversity • community outreach • civic engagement

beautiful and positive ideas



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