

Institutional (Organizational) Overview

Columbus State Community College has undergone significant change in recent years. A number of factors and events have converged within close proximity to create a transformative moment in time. These factors include conversion to a semester-based academic calendar, the opening of a second campus in neighboring Delaware County, the hiring of a new president and the associated leadership changes and, most importantly, a systematic college-wide focus on student success.

In the spirit of AQIP and to maximize the transformative moment mentioned above, the college has just completed a year-long process to review and revise its mission, vision and values statements. The new Columbus State mission statement, approved by the Board in January 2013, reflects what the college—through its employees—strives to accomplish every day: “To educate and inspire, providing our students with the opportunity to achieve their goals.” The college identified eight crucial values to infuse and support the new mission: student success, inclusion, quality, innovation, learning, partnership, leadership and stewardship. And to guide its practice of mission and values, the college adopted the following vision: “Columbus State Community College is Central Ohio’s front door to higher education and a leader in advancing our region’s prosperity.”

The revised mission, values and vision build on the college’s half-century of responding to the varied educational needs of Central Ohioans. This “re-visioned” triangle will anchor Columbus State’s efforts as it serves more than 25,000 students on two campuses and at nine regional learning centers. The diverse student body (63 percent white, 24 percent black, 3 percent Asian, 3 percent Hispanic, and 7 percent Other) hails mainly from the college’s four-county attendance area, but many students also attend from around Ohio, across the U.S. and from 110+ foreign countries. The college’s students are equally diverse in age, learning experiences and economic background, but their use of financial aid is a fairly common denominator. Nearly two-thirds of students take advantage of financial aid of some kind with 55 percent receiving Pell Grants.

To help students learn and provide the support needed, Columbus State employs more than 300 full-time faculty, 242 staff and 439 administrators. The college maintains academic and operational flexibility by cultivating experienced part-time associates. Currently there are approximately 1,300 adjunct faculty and 350 part-time staff at Columbus State.

To meet the needs of students and the community, the college offers over 80 majors in the degree of the Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS). Students also have the option of earning Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Sciences (AS) degrees. Columbus State offers online/distance learning as a unique alternative to traditional on-campus learning. Online/distance learning allows students from around the city or around the globe to learn, using the latest interactive Web and video technologies (mainly three different modalities) without the limits of time and place. Distance/blended education represents 29 percent of the college’s FTE with 11,601 students enrolled in at least one distance course.

In addition to the personnel and programs noted above, other key college resources (discussed later within this portfolio) enhance Columbus State’s achievement of its mission, values and vision:

Center for Workforce Development employs both a company and an industry sector approach in identifying the needs of its community stakeholders.

Central Ohio Compact is a regional strategy group, led by Columbus State, which focuses on college completion and career success. Members include area colleges, K-12 districts and the Educational Service Centers of Central Ohio.

Achieving the Dream is a national reform network dedicated to community college student success and degree completion and to helping low-income students and students of color complete an education and obtain market-valued credentials.

Preferred Pathway® guarantees Columbus State graduates admission to The Ohio State University. Other 2+2 and 3+1 bachelor's degree partnerships have been developed with area universities providing affordable access to a baccalaureate degree.

Dual Enrollment and Other K-12 Initiatives: Innovative partnerships with K-12 districts and four-year colleges and universities advance the student success model for Columbus State.

Columbus State Police Department designs support processes that contribute to college security and the physical safety of students, employees, and visitors.

Shared Governance addresses college policy and procedures through the Academic Council's ten faculty committees and the Policy Council, on which faculty, staff and administrators serve.

Columbus State Community College has matured over the past four years in its approach to the AQIP process. In particular, the college has employed project management principles to organize and implement major initiatives such as the Switch to Semesters project completed last fall. This multi-year transition from a quarter-based curriculum to a semester-based one required a large, cross-functional team, many of whom were new to project management. Faculty, staff, and administrators acquired valuable, transferable skills as they evaluated and tested proposed procedures, devised computer program patches, and identified risks, deadlines and milestones to complete this project. Project management principles were also used in an analysis of the college's Information Technology Services, in preparation for the college's reaffirmation of accreditation, and participation in Achieving the Dream.

To broaden the scope of involvement and decision making in continuous quality improvement, the college recently instituted a two-tiered process. The first tier involves the Operational Steering Committee, made up of leadership within the college faculty, staff and administration. Overseen by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and led by a Faculty Fellow, this committee identifies the work to be done within the AQIP process and provides information and recommendations to the Strategic Steering Committee (second tier), which is composed of the President and Cabinet.

Since the 2009 Systems Portfolio, the college completed eight action projects and has three in progress. Completed projects are Master Plan Phases I & II, Making Sense of CCSSE, Switch to Semesters Phases II & III, Career Assistance to Undecided Students Phases II & III, and Improving Parking Management. Still in process are Dual Enrollment, Achieving the Dream – Planning Year, and the final Master Plan.

In 2009, Columbus State became a member of the Foundations of Excellence. From that starting point, the college began a more intentional journey to understand its students and to collect data that would inform decisions about supporting student learning and success. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), completed in 2010 and again in 2013, provided critical national benchmarking data to further support Columbus State's student success initiative. To put that data to work, the college chartered an action project to analyze, use and distribute the CCSSE data to the college. Not only did the college complete the data evaluation successfully, but, in the process, it also created a procedure for handling future data sets and is in the final stages of developing a data warehouse for storing such important benchmarking data.

Continuous Quality Improvement efforts receive a high degree of participation at Columbus State. At the Spring 2012 In-Service Day, AQIP leaders collected information regarding current continuous quality improvement activities in which employees were engaged within their departments. More than forty activities were identified, demonstrating a solid culture of continuous quality improvement at the college.