



Academic Plan

2011 - 2015 Executive Summary

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
 EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE



2011 - 2015 Academic Plan

Introduction

Following a broadly based, highly participatory process that produced an academic vision for the college founded on our mission and commitment statements, SUNY Empire State College has identified three themes that will guide our academic progress through 2015.

Our Mandate

SUNY Empire State College was created in 1971 to reconceptualize and recreate higher education in ways that provide opportunities for students across the state of New York and throughout the world to engage in high-quality learning and to pursue a degree. The college is responsive to the individual needs of our students and committed to the communities we serve. Today, SUNY Empire State College enrolls more than 20,000 students annually and has more than 63,000 alumni.

The Mission of SUNY Empire State College

SUNY Empire State College's dedicated faculty and staff use innovative, alternative and flexible approaches to higher education that transform people and communities by providing rigorous programs that connect individuals' unique and diverse lives to their personal learning goals.

Our Commitments

As a community of learners at a public institution, we are committed to:

- critical reflective inquiry that encourages active engagement in the local and the global community.
- promoting social justice and a sustainable world through responsiveness to human and social circumstances.
- ensuring a healthy democracy that recognizes and respects diversity in all its forms.
- supporting the individual goals of our students in a collaborative mentoring environment.
- acknowledging multiple avenues of learning and prior college-level learning through rigorous evaluation.
- developing, implementing and assessing new approaches to learning that recognize and adapt to the diverse needs of our learners.
- fostering respectful, creative and vibrant learning environments for students, faculty and staff.
- supporting the scholarly, creative and professional goals of the college community.
- serving students and the public with a high level of courtesy and effectiveness.
- advocating at the regional, state and national levels for the needs of our students and of higher education.
- expanding access to affordable, high-quality educational opportunities through partnerships with employers, unions, government agencies, the armed forces, community organizations and other educational institutions.



Our Core Values

The core values of SUNY Empire State College reflect the commitments of a dynamic, participatory and experimenting institution accessible and dedicated to the needs of a richly diverse adult student body. These values are woven into the decisions we make about what we choose to do, how we carry out our work in all parts of the institution, and how we judge the outcome of our individual and collective efforts. More than a claim about what we have already attained, the core values support our continuing inquiry about what learning means and how it occurs.

We value learning-mentoring goals that:

- respond to the academic, professional and personal needs of each student;
- identify and build upon students' existing knowledge and skills;
- sustain lifelong curiosity and critical inquiry;
- provide students with skills, insights and competencies that support successful college study.

We value learning-mentoring processes that:

- emphasize dialogue and collaborative approaches to study;
- support critical exploration of knowledge and experience;
- provide opportunities for active, reflective and creative academic engagement.

We value learning-mentoring modes that:

- respond to a wide array of student styles, levels, interests and circumstances;
- foster self-direction, independence and reflective inquiry;

- provide opportunities for ongoing questioning and revising;
- reflect innovation and research.

We value a learning-mentoring community that:

- defines each member as a learner, encouraging and appreciating his/her distinctive contributions;
- recognizes that learning occurs in multiple communities, environments and relationships as well as in formal academic settings;
- attracts, respects and is enriched by a wide range of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

We value a learning-mentoring organization and culture that:

- invites collaboration in the multiple contexts of our work;
- fosters innovation and experimentation;
- develops structures and policies that encourage active participation of all constituents in decision-making processes;
- advocates for the interests of learners in a variety of academic and civic forums.

The Vision for 2015

In 2015, SUNY Empire State College is widely recognized

as a pioneering and innovative public institution of higher education. It provides high-quality and affordable liberal, interdisciplinary and professional education to motivated and engaged lifelong learners everywhere in New York state and beyond.

The college, as the premier institution for adult learning within SUNY and across the nation:

- supports learners as active partners in their education;
- transcends the boundaries of time, place and ways of learning;
- integrates and engages learners with their past, present and future creative and intellectual lives;
- creates and supports cooperative initiatives among all segments of the population to foster respect, civility and a welcoming environment;
- supports the social, cultural and economic development and sustainability of both its learners and their communities.



The Academic Vision for 2015

Overview of the Plan

This plan – the first academic plan for Empire State College – is the result of a broad consultative process across the college undertaken by the Academic Planning Task Force. Its members believe this will be a living and evolving document, yet one based in the foundational value of student centeredness, a principle that ought to guide all future academic planning. The overarching themes around which the 2011 - 2015 Academic Plan is organized are:

- A. Academic Programs**
- B. Environments for Mentoring, Teaching and Learning**
- C. Faculty Planning, Scholarship and Development**

These themes are explicated in terms of one or more measurable key goals. Within each key goal, a set of objectives for achieving the goal is listed.



Theme A

Academic Programs

- *Goal A1: Create a Framework for Academic Program Development*

Objective A1.1: Clarify processes for academic program development and review current practice

Objective A1.2: Identify criteria for new academic program development

- *Goal A2: Establish a Thematic Approach to Academic Planning*

Objective A2.1: Create a framework for guiding the academic direction of the college

Objective A2.2: Create an Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences (ILAS)

Theme B

Environments for Mentoring, Teaching and Learning

- *Goal B1: Create Effective, Rich and Flexible Learning Environments*

Objective B1.1: Integrate outcome assessment and data analysis at the individual, course and programmatic level

Objective B1.2: Enhance the use of technologies to support mentoring, teaching and learning

Objective B1.3: Create welcoming environments

Objective B1.4: Implement improved planning and design of physical locations

- *Goal B2: Enhance Academic Assessment, Preparation and Support for Students from Admission to Graduation*

Objective B2.1: Build better admission policies and procedures

Objective B2.2: Assess the academic skills of undergraduate and graduate students in the pre-enrollment period

Objective B2.3: Make orientation make a difference

Objective B2.4: Support students academically

- *Goal B3: Enhance Educational Planning for Relevant Undergraduate and Graduate Programs*

Objective B3.1: Analyze the impact of enrollment growth on effective educational planning through data-driven analysis

Objective B3.2: Work toward consistency and transparency to enhance academic quality

Objective B3.3: Explore and disseminate diverse models of delivery of educational planning

- *Goal B4: Improve the Prior Learning Assessment and Academic Review Processes*

Objective B4.1: Understand current practice

Objective B4.2: Reinforce the central role of mentors through professional development

Objective B4.3: Communicate more clearly with students around the value and place of PLA

Objective B4.4: Address fiscal implications for PLA

Objective B4.5: Support the development of Empire State College generics

Objective B4.6: Enhance degree program review and approval

Objective B4.7: Enhance graduation review processes and develop a degree audit system



Theme C

Faculty Planning, Scholarship and Development

- *Goal C1: Ensure that Faculty Have the Content and Practice Expertise Necessary to Serve the Current and Future Needs of Students*

Objective C1.1: Ascertain the current state of the faculty

Objective C1.2: Analyze and recommend optimal configurations to meet the current and proposed needs of the college

Objective C1.3: Develop and resource a five-year plan for faculty hiring

Objective C1.4: Develop guidelines to integrate faculty planning into new academic program development

- *Goal C2: Support Faculty Development in Terms of Scholarship and Practice*

Objective C2.1: Promote scholarly activity as an integral part of mastery of subject matter and teaching effectiveness

Objective C2.2: Encourage and support collaboration

Objective C2.3: Identify and optimize the resources for faculty development

Objective C2.4: Develop a plan and timeline to analyze and address faculty obligation in a sustainable and comprehensive sense

Objective C2.5: Examine faculty retention and reappointment success

Objective C2.6: Provide ongoing support for all faculty and academic professional employees in terms of their ongoing learning, development and renewal

Objective C2.7: Leadership in adult learning

Objective C2.8: Continue to support “new” mentor orientation

Objective C2.9: Explore “continuing” mentor training



SUNY Empire State College Learning Goals

Philosophy and Rationale

Growing out of SUNY Empire State College's unique mission, the learning goals outlined below serve as a vital link between the college's historical mission, the current context of rapid educational change, and the future of our institution in a global society where knowledge and learning remain urgently important. These statements encapsulate the values that we bring to our work with students, and they articulate our hopes for our graduates. We also believe it is our responsibility as educators to enter into collaborative relationships with future students, which requires transparency about our goals and values. Finally, by clearly stating these goals, we will be able to both reflect upon our students' and our own success through a creative, collaborative and iterative assessment process that extends across multiple institutional levels.

Graduates of SUNY Empire State College will demonstrate competence in the following areas of learning, appropriate to their degree levels. At the graduate level, these goals will be incorporated as appropriate to the program of study.

Active Learning

Assess and build upon previous learning and experiences to pursue new learning, independently and in collaboration with others.

Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

Cultivate a broad, interdisciplinary understanding in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as expertise in a particular field.

Social Responsibility

Engage in ethical reasoning, and reflect on issues such as democratic citizenship, diversity, social justice and environmental sustainability, both locally and globally.

Communication

Express and receive ideas effectively, in multiple contexts and through multiple strategies.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Evaluate, analyze, synthesize and critique key concepts and experiences, and apply diverse perspectives to find creative solutions to problems concerning human behavior, society and the natural world.

Quantitative Literacy

Read, interpret, use and present quantitative information effectively.

Information and Digital Media Literacy

Critically access, evaluate, understand, create and share information using a range of collaborative technologies to advance learning, as well as personal and professional development.



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