

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

I. MISSION

HCC ensures equitable access to affordable, high-quality educational programs, while fostering workforce development and cultural vitality in the region.

II. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

State Plan Goal 1- Access

HCC's most recent strategic plan begins with a commitment to enrollment. HCC is dedicated to providing equitable and accessible opportunities for affordable, top-notch postsecondary educational and training options within its service region. Affordability is key when discussing access to higher education. In Fiscal Year 2022, the tuition and fees for a full-time HCC credit student amounted to only 43 percent of the cost of attending Maryland public four-year institutions (as indicated by Indicator 7). During that same year, 95 percent of credit students received financial assistance (as shown in Indicator E a.), with just under a third being recipients of Pell grants (as per Indicator E b.). This signifies a notable rise in financial assistance provided to HCC students due to the availability of extra federal funds under the HEERF program. Additionally, there has been a noticeable, strategic increase in the availability of scholarship programs designed to support students pursuing Workforce Solutions Training Certificates, with the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship for Continuing Education serving as one such example. This state scholarship is specifically tailored for Continuing Education students who are enrolled in certificate programs geared towards building careers in the workforce.

In fiscal year 2022, significant enrollment growth was not anticipated. Community colleges in Maryland as well as other parts of the country continued to adapt to the enduring impact of the pandemic, demographic shifts, changing workforce needs, and fluctuations in the economy. During this time, credit headcounts decreased by 2.5 percent compared to the previous year. However, non-credit enrollments saw a substantial gain, with an almost 34 percent increase. The College experienced significant increases in both unduplicated headcount and annual course enrollments in continuing education courses, indicating a return to pre-pandemic levels (Indicators 8 and 9). This rise in non-credit students resulted in an overall annual unduplicated headcount increase of 15.8 percent compared to the previous year (Indicator 1). Moving forward, the College projects a significant enrollment gain beginning in Fall 2023 as the dual enrollment program expands, offering more high school students the opportunity to take college courses.

HCC acknowledges the pivotal role of simplifying the admissions and enrollment process to foster increased registrations among students. In recent years, the College has taken strides to enhance both the application software and its overall process, making it more efficient and user-friendly on various devices, including phones and computers. Furthermore, applicants who initiate but do not complete their applications receive timely reminders and offers of assistance to facilitate their journey.

The pandemic brought a heightened sense of urgency, prompting HCC to reevaluate and reshape its approach to education delivery. This has become a strategic part of the College's commitment to expanding student access. The crisis showed that HCC is capable of offering the flexibility the students look for when scheduling their courses (Indicators I, 6). Prior to the pandemic, the College had been strategically increasing its offerings of online and hybrid courses to enhance accessibility and better align with workforce demands. This shift aimed to limit barriers such as location, class schedules, transportation, and time constraints. HCC continues to offer a number of degrees and certificates at least partially online, several of which can be completed entirely online. HCC's dedication to improving online instruction quality remains steadfast. One example is the adoption of Quality Matters, a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses and online components. Additionally, HCC has invested in Blackboard ALLY, a valuable tool that aids faculty in creating accessible materials for students online. This tool was purchased to create more inclusive learning environments for all students.

Diversity and inclusion stand among the core values at HCC, and the institution takes its role as a community leader seriously when it comes to its commitment to recruiting a diverse student and employee body. Based on recent census data and population estimates from the Census Bureau, Washington County has continued to become more racially and ethnically diverse over the last decade. Minority groups currently comprise about 25 percent of the county population, while the College's minority credit students accounted for 29.4 percent of all credit enrollments in fall 2022 (Indicator H). Individuals who identified as Black comprise the largest minority group, both in the county and at HCC, and accounted for 10.9 percent of Fall 2022 enrollment with the Hispanic population following closely at 10.1 percent.

HCC has adopted a range of programs and initiatives aimed at attracting, retaining, and supporting a diverse student body. Among these initiatives are several key programs designed to offer crucial services to at-risk students, ensuring they receive the support needed to successfully progress through their studies and attain their educational goals. The Career Program Achievers (CPA) program works with low-income adult students enrolled in short-term training programs. The TRiO: Student Support Services program provides support services to students who are first-generation, low-income, and/or have disabilities. The Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program is a federal grant program that enables HCC to support Pell-eligible student parents through awarding weekly child care stipends to students' child care providers. Additional support for student diversity and inclusion is also evidenced by the range of extracurricular student clubs and organizations offered through the Student Activities Office. Historically, the College had a Multicultural Committee devoted to promoting student learning, appreciation of differences and similarities, educational and cultural programming, and professional development programs that helped create an open campus environment. This committee recently transitioned to a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, a more encompassing group of employees charged with providing strategic guidance on college diversity and inclusion issues. This new committee is charged with planning the annual on-campus diversity event in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. among other major campus initiatives.

One of the College's priorities has been to address the shortage of role models for its increasingly diverse student body. The challenge to recruit full-time faculty and administrators from minority groups to provide positive role models and to help create a culturally diverse environment is ongoing. As of fall 2022, 6.7 percent of all full-time faculty (Indicator 12) were minorities, a percentage that decreased from fall 2021. In comparison, the percentage of minorities classified as administrative and professional staff (10.7%, Indicator 13) remained fairly level to fall 2021 (10.4 percent). To foster an inclusive work environment, the Human Resources department sponsors training on discrimination and harassment for all employees, ensuring that steps are taken to create a more welcoming and equitable workplace.

State Plan Goal 2 - Success

HCC remains dedicated to the enhancement and refinement of support systems to improve program quality and elevate student satisfaction and success. HCC has formulated strategies aimed at bolstering retention in programs with low retention and completion rates, as well as improving selected student service offerings. Undoubtedly, the pandemic posed multifaceted challenges for students. As seen in the degree progress charts, the successful-persister rate after four years (Indicator 17) for the Black student fall 2018 cohort dropped to 59.3 percent, trailing the rate for White students in the cohort. This rate decreased for both groups from the previous year. The graduation-transfer rates for the cohorts were 47.5 percent for Black students (Indicator 19) and 55.0 percent for White students.

HCC awarded 763 degrees in FY 22 (Indicator 20); a small decrease from the 775 awarded in FY 21, the enrollment declines that began almost a decade ago have had a correlating effect on overall completion numbers.

The students completing the Health Science programs faced challenges and appeared to struggle in the midst of the pandemic, much like other students. First-time passing rates on licensure/certification examinations (Indicator 23) for Practical Nursing dipped from 100 percent to 92.6 percent. The pass rate for HCC's associate degree nursing program dropped to 85.7 percent from 95.6 percent. The percentage of radiology graduates passing the registry examination experienced a drop from 100 percent to 85.0 percent.

However, there is good news related to retention indicating a potential return to normalcy following the crisis. The Fall-to-Fall retention rate of college-ready students for the fall 2021 cohort was 60.4 percent, which was an increase from the previous year. The retention of developmental students increased from 44.2 percent to 54.4 percent (Indicator 14).

HCC continues to monitor and assess significant structural changes designed to improve developmental student retention and completion. Several years ago, all developmental levels across English, English as a Second Language (ESL), and math were standardized. Furthermore, mentors are assigned to all adjunct developmental studies instructors to provide advice and instructional support, which ultimately benefits students. In January 2019, a new minimum placement score (below which score students will not be admitted to developmental programs) went into effect; students who test below this score can register instead for adult education classes. In addition, if students have a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher (within the last five

years), they do not need to take developmental coursework, but may directly enter college-level math and/or English. All math and English developmental courses were also restructured. For example, Developmental English now consists of one level rather than three. English as a Second Language courses offered through HCC's adult literacy services also serve as a bridge from non-credit to credit English courses once successfully completed.

The curriculum was revamped in response to the recognition that developmental coursework presented a barrier for students aspiring to complete degree or certificate programs. The revised curriculum should enable students to progress quickly but also prepare them to successfully transition to credit-level courses. Notably, the developmental completion percentages after four years for the fall 2018 cohort dipped to 51.4 percent when compared to the fall 2017 cohort (Indicator 15). HCC remains committed to closely monitoring the outcomes of these initiatives.

Consistent with student success literature, success levels of developmental completers and college-ready students exceed those of developmental non-completers. The successful-persister rate (Indicator 16), of the 2018 cohort after four years for college-ready students (82.1 percent) and developmental completers (71.2 percent) is higher than that of developmental non-completers (25.5 percent). The same is true of graduation/transfer rates (Indicator 18).

Student engagement is critical to success, specifically retention and completion. HCC has made changes in the way that advising and student support experiences are delivered. Students are assigned a faculty advisor with whom they are encouraged to consult regarding program-related materials and future coursework. Students are also encouraged to be more self-sufficient by using Ellucian Self-Service to register for their classes online and track their progress to program completion, as well as establish positive student-faculty engagement. This, in turn, frees retention and registration staff to spend more time with those students who need other support. Case management programs, such as TRiO: Student Support Services (SSS), Disability Support Services (DSS), and Career Program Achievers (CPA), as well as the BIT/CARE team play a big role in HCC's success with program completion. Additional student spaces were created to support retention, growth, and development by providing more opportunities to engage students. In recent years, HCC added a full-time veterans advisor position to help ensure that student veterans are on track for graduation and access their educational benefits in order to remain on track.

State Plan Goal 3 - Innovation

HCC recognizes its vital role within the community and is committed to actively collaborating with both new and established partners in government, economic development, education, and business to develop and sustain the regional workforce pipeline to advance the vitality of the college and the region. As a major partner in the economic and workforce development of the region, HCC educates and trains a significant portion of the regional workforce through both credit and noncredit experiences. To respond to and anticipate employer needs, local and state employment trends are studied via environmental scanning and input by advisory committees. As a result, HCC developed high skill/high wage credit programs in Biotechnology, Alternative Energy, Medical Laboratory Technician, and Cybersecurity. All career programs have advisory committees, which include industry/business leaders who review program curriculum, provide

information regarding employment/hiring trends and changes in the field, and provide input into curriculum development/revision. For example, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) participates on the biotechnology advisory committee, First Solar on the alternative energy advisory committee, and the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) on the cybersecurity advisory committee.

HCC is continuing to shape its array of credit-free course and program offerings to serve new demands for content as well as instructional delivery preferences. Workforce development, certifications and licensures, and contract training are administered through the Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education unit. FY 22 unduplicated annual enrollment in contract training (Indicator 28) increased significantly compared to FY 21 following the lifting of COVID-related restrictions. Both annual unduplicated headcount and enrollment in continuing education workforce development courses saw associated increases as well but not as dramatic (Indicator 26).

In terms of the physical campus, HCC continues to move forward with campus expansion and site improvements. The HCC future plan incorporates projects that will strengthen the sense of arrival to campus as well as enhance pedestrian connectivity, safety and comfort, and create a more sustainable and unifying landscape. HCC is also committed to projects that are energy efficient such as the air conditioning system installed in the Athletic, Recreation, and Community Center (ARCC) which is used to accommodate large cultural, community, and social events. The campus expansion includes a new location that will house off-campus skilled trades training programs at the D.M. Bowman Family Workforce Training Center.

HCC has finished construction on a renovated space that supports the growth of the college's business curriculum as well as maintains and improves services to growing businesses. The Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Studies (CBES) serves as a center for high-tech startup businesses, while the rest of the building is dedicated to teaching and learning, including a portion of the manufacturing floor newly dedicated to supporting HCC's advanced manufacturing programs for robotics. Updates included, but not be limited to, a new roof and fire alarm system, as well as extensive remodeling of all floors, including the addition of classroom spaces, updates to client offices, the addition of a new e-business office, and the creation of a designated IT network room.

Commission Prompts- Equity Gaps

Identifying Long-term Equity Gaps:

- What are the largest long-term equity gaps that exist in student access, success, and innovation in your institution? Please note the long-term equity gaps refers to the inequities that existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic and persisted over the years.
- How are these equity gaps uncovered/discovered/identified at your institution and how are they shared with your community?
- What interventions have been implemented to eliminate these gaps?

The largest long-term equity gaps that exist in student access, success, and innovation at HCC become evident when analyzing the degree progress analysis submitted in conjunction with this

report. While progress has been made, disparities persist among the students (Indicators 17, 19). HCC's commitment to addressing these disparities is underscored by the practice of including disaggregated data in reports created by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness such as the Fact Book. This ensures that HCC remains responsive to the unique needs of diverse student populations. This data is reviewed regularly within the institution by committees and decision-making bodies to inform interventions aimed at addressing these gaps and fostering greater equity and inclusion. Several of these interventions were mentioned earlier in this report.

Measuring Equity Gaps:

- How has your institution used disaggregated data to identify equity gaps in students' educational opportunities and outcomes?
- What stakeholder engagement (students, faculty, staff, etc.) is used to collect and review this data?
- Does your institution set goals/benchmarks in regard to the elimination of equity gaps? If so, what steps does your institution take to ensure accountability in meeting the established goals/benchmarks of equity?

HCC's most recent strategic plan includes a commitment to retention. This commitment aims to develop, strengthen, and implement focused retention strategies that foster completion and success. The team working to implement this element of the plan has made considerable efforts to collect new data supporting their work. Surveys and focus groups are the primary means of gathering stakeholder engagement data beyond the typical quantitative indicators of success. This data is reviewed by various campus committees such as the President's Cabinet, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Academic Council, and Enrollment and Student Success Council (ESSC). These groups meet regularly to review and analyze data and information that might indicate equity gaps in students' educational opportunities and outcomes. HCC's goals/benchmarks in regard to eliminating equity gaps are to be embedded within the college retention plan.

III. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND IMPACT

HCC has provided quality training and education to the residents of Washington County and the surrounding communities since its inception in 1946. Since that time, the College has strived to be a full partner in the social and economic development of the region. In the most recent strategic plan, the College identified six commitments that guide the priorities of our work for the next three years. Partnerships and Community are two key components among those six priorities. To achieve success, the College is working with local employers to add internship and apprenticeship opportunities across an array of educational programs. HCC's Advancement Office continues to foster a culture of giving in the community that will expand scholarship opportunities for future HCC students.

Partnerships are essential to enrollment and student success at HCC. HCC's efforts to attract and retain local high school graduates continue to be a high priority in FY 22. Despite challenges with engaging with the high schools during COVID, HCC remained the college of choice for

recent, college-bound high school graduates (Indicator 4). HCC continued to expand its marketing, recruitment, and programming efforts in an attempt to attain greater penetration into the traditional college-age (25 years or younger) population. Additionally, in FY 22, HCC continued to work to provide current high school students with high-quality educational opportunities. The Early College program provided dual credit classes to many students who wanted to experience college courses either on campus or at their high school (Indicator 5). For talented and motivated high school students, HCC offers the exceptional Early College Degree program, allowing students to graduate from high school with an associate's degree in a number of different fields. Finally, the College has been actively broadening opportunities for students beyond HCC through a variety of valuable articulation agreements.