



Annual Report: 2016-17 Academic Year

The Mercy College 2020 Strategic Plan, finalized in February 2015, specifies four strategic goals and related objectives that are rooted in the College's mission of providing transformative educational experiences to students. The strategic goals focus on student learning, support for student success, affordability and stability, and building a college community. The development of the plan was informed by evidence from: focus groups conducted with faculty, staff and students; data-rich self-studies of the first year experience and of the institution during the decennial review; institutional indicators, and market data on enrollment and regional trends. To evaluate progress on the plan, metrics for each strategic goal were identified and reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee in spring and fall 2015.

The College identified funding that is allocated annually to support strategic initiatives linked to the plan. Those initiatives have been noted with an asterisk (*) in this report.

The report for each goal, below, outlines the key strategic activities that contributed toward our strategy in the second year of the plan. The time frame for this report is July 2016 through June 2017. The college has continued to advance the strategic activities identified in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 reports.

Goal 1: Student Learning

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Co-requisite Remediation: Math***: Redesigned introductory mathematics courses in spring 2016 to include additional support and remediation in college-level courses (Math 115 or 116) and eliminated the introductory Math 105 course. The redesigned course follows an emporium model that minimizes faculty time lecturing; instead, students use interactive software and receive on-demand, personalized faculty assistance. Revisions to the Math Redesign project were implemented beginning fall 2016, resulting in 75% of freshmen passing the college-level math credit by the end of their first year (as compared to 67% before the redesign).
2. **Co-requisite Remediate: English***: Redesigned general education English sequence to include additional support in the form of a co-requisite course (English 110) for students taking English 111 who require remediation. English Redesign launched in fall 2016 for all students; as a result 65.4% of incoming freshmen passed college-level English by the end of their first year (as compared to 22% before the redesign).
3. **Pulse on Learning (PoL)**: Implemented PoL (formerly called Early Student Feedback) in AY15-16 to improve teaching effectiveness and improve student learning by gathering immediately usable feedback from students early in a term on how they are experiencing the learning environment. Expanded the pilot to include all School of Health and Natural Science faculty: 52 faculty participated in fall 2016 and 98 participated in spring 2017, impacting 271 course sections throughout AY16-17.
4. **Fundamentals of Teaching***: Launched a hybrid course for adjunct faculty in fall 2016 to foster teaching excellence through peer learning in order to increase student learning. In AY16-17, 76 faculty participated and 43 faculty completed the course.
5. **Course Mentors and Electronic Handbooks***: Electronic handbooks were created for 20 courses with a large number of sections, taught primarily by adjuncts. These handbooks serve as a central repository for information about the course (including syllabi, sample outlines, required assessments, rubrics) as well as resources for teaching for both full-time and adjunct faculty.
6. **Reinvigorate Honors Program**: Took steps to strengthen the college-wide honors program. A self-study of the current honors program was completed in fall 2016. New co-directors of honors program were appointed and in place by spring 2017, and a restructured program is scheduled to begin in fall 2018.
7. **High Impact Practices***: Investments were made through the Mercy Success Toolkit in initiatives aimed at increasing student opportunities to participate in high impact practices, such as opportunities for students to work with faculty on undergraduate research projects and internships.

Goal 2: Student Success

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Block Scheduling:** Faculty and administrative workgroup built the infrastructure to support cohorts of entering students who will take courses together in the fall and spring of their freshmen year, with the goal of creating a sense of connectedness to faculty and the institution – and each other. Launched in fall 2016 with 44.5% of freshmen participating.
2. **Guided Pathways System (GPS):** New elements of GPS were implemented by PACT in fall 2016, including the roll-out of new four-year academic program maps that outlined default pathways for each degree program and identified milestone courses. PACT adopted the EAB advising tool and a student-facing mobile app that provides advisors and students with information about when a student falls off-track and guidance to get back on-track. Ingenuity with this initiative led Mercy to be recognized by EAB in 2017 with the Technology Pioneer of the Year Award.
3. **Career Readiness Programming*:** Launched the Internship grant Program in spring 2017: 28 students received a \$1500 stipend to participate in an unpaid internship. The career office conducted over 115 visits to classrooms, reaching over 1950 students, to teach basic career skills.
4. **Achieving Mavericks*:** Expanded a grant program (modeled on the HEOP program) to provide travel and book vouchers to over 50 high-risk students, with a goal of increasing persistence and retention.
5. **Expanded Student Life at BX and MT*:** Hired a full-time staff member dedicated primarily to provide Student Life programming to the Bronx and Manhattan campuses. Greater visibility of Student Life has been created at these campuses and the number of student life events offered increased to at least one event a week with growing student participation.

Goal 3: Affordability and Financial Health

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **MSCHE Accreditation:** Maintained accreditation with MSCHE. The monitoring report on Standards 7 and 14 was submitted in March 2017 and accepted by Middle States on June 23, 2017. No additional follow-up was requested.
2. **Maintain Dobbs Ferry Enrollment at Capacity while Increasing Overall New Student Enrollment:** Held enrollment summits at the Bronx, Manhattan and Yorktown campus, which yielded new ideas on how to expand academic program offerings and cultivate campus community. Expanded community outreach expanded through the launch of programs like the Bronx Advisory Council, Social Media Marketing Center in Manhattan, and Business Incubator in the Bronx. Several additional initial steps were taken to increase enrollment at the Bronx and Manhattan campuses including increased financial aid to students with the highest need, investing in broad marketing campaigns about the campuses programs, adding instructional resources and course offerings in the Bronx, and focusing on the student experience through expanding student life programming, building student common spaces and offering new food options.
3. **Mercy Scholars:** Launched this new scholarship program with donor support in fall 2016 to support high achieving students with a OEFC to graduate college in four years and with minimal debt. The program provides students financially (providing the balance of tuition, books and fees not covered by a federal Pell Grant and NYS TAP), academically, socially and emotionally. The first cohort of 25 students saw a 100% retention rate to fall 2017.
4. **Fundraising:** Exceeded development goal of \$2.5 million with total gifts of \$2.7 million.
5. **Mitigate Employee Turnover Rate:** Conducted a study in fall 2016 of staff compensation as compared to industry peers. Developed a plan to respond to findings of the study to be implemented beginning in December 2017.

Goal 4: College Community

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Professional Development:** In Spring 2017, launched a series of workshops and webinars to engage staff in learning more about the college, higher education careers, management tools and other skills that will enhance their professional development. In the first eight months, 190 unique employees from across the four campuses participated in at least one of the 32 available workshops available in-person and online.
2. **Veterans Focus at Bronx Campus:** The College increased the resources available to student veterans. PACT hired a mentor to work with veterans and in fall 2016 the College unveiled the Veterans' Center at the Bronx campus to help student veterans transition from soldier to scholar. In spring 2017 Mercy was named a Military Friendly Silver Award Recipient, meaning the college falls within 30 percent of the 10th ranked institution on the Military Friendly[®] Schools list.
3. **Clinical Simulation and Learning Labs:** Grand opening of a new healthcare wing in Main Hall on the Dobbs Ferry Campus. The 12,000 square-foot space consists of several specialized labs, filled with state-of-the-art technology, designed to simulate different disciplines within a health care facility and give students real-world experience.
4. **Student Success Conference:** A workgroup of faculty and staff planned and hosted a conference focused on student success. Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children's Zone, gave the keynote address and other notable student success experts participated in panel discussions. There were 180 attendees (25% of participants were external visitors).
5. **Bronx Advisory Board:** As an external advising body, the Bronx Advisory Council was launched in spring 2017 to provide support, advice and counsel to the President and the senior team at Mercy College. In the first two meetings in 2017, the Council, made up of Bronx leaders across multiple sectors, provided insights into ways to Mercy could strengthen its programs, improve outreach, and increase its base of support in the Bronx. Council members are committed to increasing the College's visibility, promoting the academic programs offered at the College, making connections, and serving as advocates for the College.