



SUNY EMPIRE
STATE COLLEGE

Self-Study Report

for the Middle States Commission
on Higher Education

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Institutional Context

SUNY Empire State College (SUNY ESC) educates more than 17,000 students in person, online, and through a blend of both modalities, at more than 30 locations in New York and at seven international sites worldwide. Together with one of the college's more than 1,300 faculty mentors, each undergraduate student designs his or her own individualized pathway to a college degree that accommodates his or her schedule and awards credit for prior college-level learning. There are also structured degree options at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. SUNY ESC awards more than 3,000 degrees annually and 94 percent of graduates remain in New York state. Today, 87,000 of the college's alumni are entrepreneurs, veterans, and active members of the military, professional athletes, teachers, medical professionals, and leaders in their fields, as well as in their communities.

Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning

The language of the college's mission has been reaffirmed and refreshed over the years, remaining fundamentally similar since its founding, but the means to achieve the mission have evolved. The mission states:

Mission

SUNY Empire State College provides motivated adult learners with access to innovative, flexible, and quality academic programs that empower people and strengthen communities. We build on the diversity of our students, their work and life experiences, and their individual personal and professional goals as the cornerstone for each academic program.

Vision

SUNY Empire State College will be the leading public college for students across New York state and around the world seeking affordable and flexible, quality degrees. We will be distinguished by our outstanding faculty and staff, our record of student success, our innovative programs and personalized learning opportunities, our rich continuum of student support services, our social and economic impact, and our commitment to a diverse and engaged academic community.

Transitions

In the interval since the periodic review process that concluded in 2015, the college has undergone significant change and renewal. The self-study process presented a welcome opportunity to reflect on the impact of those changes and to contribute to the development of a new strategic plan and focused efforts to support students.

The college has experienced major leadership transitions since the Periodic Review Report (PRR). President Merodie Hancock was appointed in 2013 and left the college to assume the presidency of another institution in March 2018. Dr. Mitchell Nesler served as officer in charge for a year and a half while a presidential search was conducted. That search successfully concluded with the appointment of Dr. Jim Malatras as president in July 2019. In addition, since the last PRR, the college has seen several transitions in the provost role. Shortly after President Hancock started at the college, a new provost was appointed who served for about two years. Following his departure, and a brief interim period, a new provost was appointed who also served about two years. Dr. Meg Benke, a previous provost and acting president, stepped in as acting provost in October 2018. President Malatras appointed Dr. Benke as permanent provost in August 2019, soon after he joined the college.

College Restructuring

SUNY Empire State College was founded in 1971 as a statewide, nonresidential, distributed college with a focus on innovative and flexible delivery of instruction and services. At that time, technology did not permit the types of virtual connectivity enjoyed today. The college thus developed an administrative structure based on regional center hubs from Buffalo to Long Island. Faculty were organized locally and had secondary affiliations with other faculty at the college in their disciplines who were housed in other locations around New York state. Regional deans oversaw local operations and had responsibility for faculty in multiple disciplines who were located at their centers. Faculty tenure and promotion recommendations started at the local level with center-based committees that included faculty from multiple disciplines at one location, rather than within an academic department. Regional center-based deans conducted reviews for all locally based faculty, regardless of discipline. These recommendations then went to a collegewide Academic Personnel Committee before going to the provost and ultimately the president for decisions regarding reappointment, continuing appointment, and promotion. Support services such as recruitment, student services, and academic support also were administered locally. As the college grew, so did the number of locations. The college has more than 30 locations across the state of New York. Distance-learning programs, graduate studies, and nursing were coordinated centrally.

Although necessary given the technological limitations of an earlier time, this decentralized model did not promote strong administrative oversight of the college's academic programs, nor opportunities for planning needed to respond to the evolving landscape of higher education. The college's decentralized management of academic programming and enrollment/student services over the years led to inconsistencies in the student experience and an inability to realize efficiencies by working as one integrated college. In addition, as new faculty joined the college, they increasingly wanted more formal connections and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in their respective disciplines.

In 2013, Dr. Merodie Hancock began a dialogue with the college community concerning the desired future state of SUNY Empire State College that ultimately moved the institution from being administratively organized by geographic region to a focus on centralized services and faculty organization by academic area. Dialogue engaging the college community focused on considering how to stay true to our founding mandates while being responsive to a rapidly changing higher-education environment. This collegewide conversation was a preliminary step that led to ESC 2.0, a "refresh" of the college.

By interviewing staff about their work, the college also completed an inventory of regional operations that was used as a baseline for a realignment of duties and organizational structure. The day-to-day operations of regional locations, along with recruitment and retention efforts, became centrally coordinated within a department for regional operations. Student services and academic services are now also coordinated centrally with distributed staff.

As part of the major academic reorganization, the college's 12 undergraduate areas of study were grouped into five schools comprising the School for Undergraduate Studies: Science, Mathematics, and Technology; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Business; Human Services; and Arts and Humanities. Each of these schools is overseen by a dean. Among their responsibilities, the deans supervise faculty and oversee disciplinary academic programming. This organizational structure ensures faculty are closely connected to their dean and colleagues within their disciplines so that they can collectively implement changes to the curriculum based on current trends in higher education and outcomes assessment activities. The faculty also can collaboratively identify best practices that advance the teaching and learning environment of the college. Additionally, faculty tenure and promotion recommendations are made by colleagues in academic departments with expertise that aligns with the candidates. The college is continuing to update the policies and processes needed within these schools. Other academic programs, such as labor, international education, nursing and allied health, and graduate studies were already organized by discipline and did not undergo reorganization to the extent of some of the undergraduate programs.

College Climate

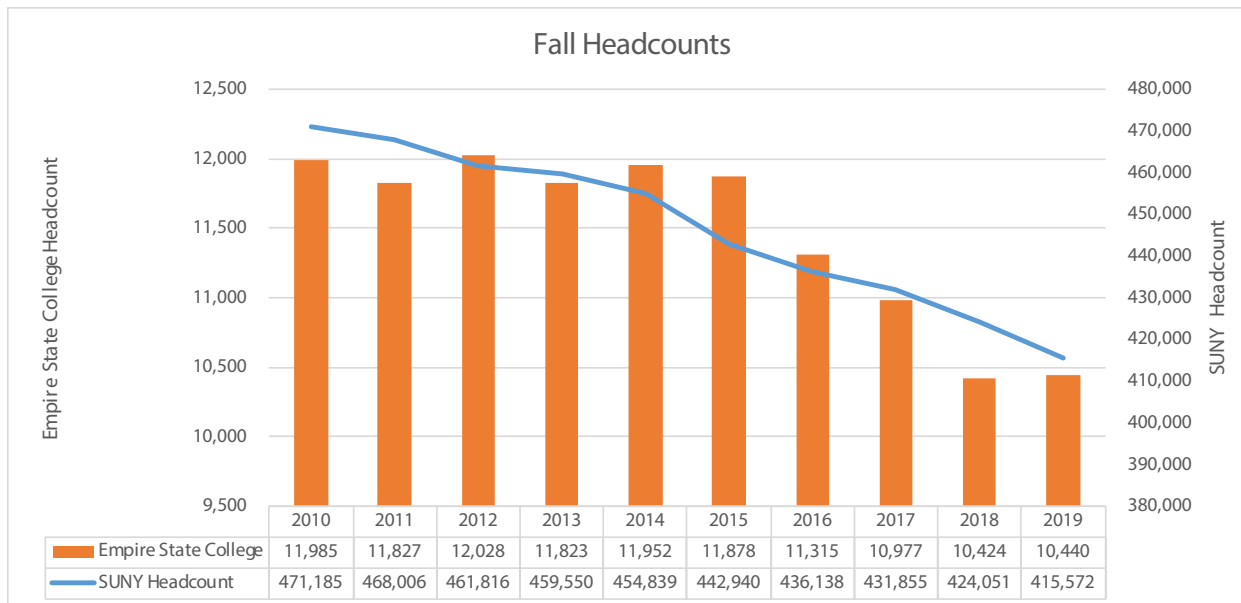
SUNY Empire State College instituted several climate surveys of different employee groups in 2010. Such a survey is generally conducted every three years. The survey provides an important opportunity to assess the work climate at the college and to better understand how employees view their work at the college. The most recent survey was conducted in May 2018 shortly after the departure of President Merodie Hancock. The new student information system was about to be rolled out, and many were still trying to adapt to the college reorganization. Key elements in the faculty and staff surveys were rated significantly lower than in the previous survey (6.9.10 Faculty Climate Survey Report 2018; 6.9.11 Staff Climate Survey Report). In response to these findings, the college's Climate Committee was charged by the senate chair and the office in charge with analyzing the results and making fast-action recommendations for improvements to the college, which occurred in spring 2019 (6.4.07 Climate Survey Report 2019). Many of the recommendations already have moved to implementation, such as the creation of an Ombuds Council and training coordination out of the Office of Human Resources. A repeat of the survey is planned for the 2020-2021 year.

Banner Implementation

The college underwent a major Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) migration from Datatel Colleague to Ellucian Banner starting in 2016 and went live in 2018. The college used Colleague for 20 years and had developed a fair amount of customization in the system, with a sophisticated data cube for enrollment reporting and data analytics. The reestablishment of core reporting and decision support tools has been slower than expected. The combination of the restructuring and the Banner rollout created some challenges for the organization in core business processes.

Enrollments and Fiscal Resources

Enrollments for public colleges and universities in New York have been declining since 2010, as depicted in the figure below. SUNY Empire State College's enrollments also have declined during this same time period. Given the college's disproportionate dependency on tuition revenue within the State University of New York system, declining enrollments have put greater pressure on the college's budget. Rightsizing the college's staff to match enrollments has been, and continues to be, a significant challenge.



Source: SUNY BI, Fall Early Student Submissions

SUNY Online

Empire State College has a robust existing online program. In 2018, Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson announced a significant initiative for a collaborative effort among SUNY schools to substantially increase the number of online learners served by The State University of New York. In 2019, SUNY Empire State College was selected as one of 10 schools to participate in the initial phase of this new initiative to develop degree programs that can serve larger numbers of students. The college will be the provider for five degree programs: B.A. in Psychology, B.S. in Management, B.S. in Security Studies, MBA, and MBA in Healthcare Leadership. In addition, SUNY Empire State College is playing a lead role in providing support for instructional design, systems integration, and instructional strategies and models.

Strategic Planning

Throughout the reorganization, the goal has been to stay true to the mission, while responding to the demands of the current and future regulatory and fiscal environments. Following the restructuring, the college's strategic planning process, "Going for the Gold: Empire State College at 50, 2021 and Beyond," built out the structures to measure and assess the work of the college and to serve as a guide for the present and into the future. The reorganization has realigned SUNY Empire State College, enabling us to more effectively harness collective impact and engage in student outcomes and institutional assessment. A balanced scorecard approach has been used to guide and track progress.

Through the strategic planning process established in 2016, the college identified four strategic themes that serve as overarching pillars of our strategic plan and serve as our priorities for the Middle States Standards:

- Student Success (MSCHE Standards III, IV, V, VII)
- Academic Engagement and Innovation (MSCHE Standards III, IV)
- Expanding Impact and Recognition (MSCHE Standards I, VI)
- Operational Excellence and Sustainability (MSCHE Standards II, III, IV, VI, VII)

Self-Study Process

The self-study design at SUNY Empire State College has a tiered structure which began with the selection of the co-chairs of the Steering Committee. During spring 2017, the accreditation liaison officer (ALO) and the college Senate chair were appointed by the president to serve as co-chairs of the Steering Committee. The Senate chair was selected in recognition of her leadership and the important role that governance plays at SUNY Empire State College. Given her experiences in that role, the Middle States self-study process was a logical next step in her service to the college. The ALO has extensive experience with Middle States Accreditation and related processes. Subsequently, in spring 2018, the ALO was appointed officer in charge (interim president) and the (then immediate past) Senate chair was appointed dean for the School of Science, Mathematics, and Technology. Given their additional responsibilities, Provost Meg Benke, a previous Middle States Commissioner, was asked to take on a more significant consulting role in the self-study process. Close to the completion of the study, the ALO took another position at SUNY and the interim vice provost for academic administration was appointed as co-chair. Provost Meg Benke became the liaison to the Middle States visiting team.

Twelve working groups were formed, which included the seven standards and five areas of focus (Compliance, Evidence Inventory, Editing, Hospitality, and Communications). The work of these groups consisted of ongoing participation by more than 100 college employees, in addition to engagement with the general college community through Town Halls, Fall Academic Conference, All College, Exchange announcements, surveys, and other collegewide and divisional discussions.

The purpose of institutional self-assessment is to enhance self-understanding and to provide an opportunity for improvement. Toward that end, the self-study at SUNY Empire State College was intended to:

- Engage in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that seeks involvement from the college community
- Demonstrate how SUNY Empire State College meets the standards for accreditation with a focus on continuous improvement in order to realize our mission and goals
- Analyze current assessment practices and their impact on improving student outcomes and institutional effectiveness
- Document the integration of the college's strategic planning process with our assessment data and budget process
- Develop progressive recommendations to attain institutional goals and realize the college's vision.

Overall, the college has experienced significant transitions over the past five years. Throughout these changes, the college remained steadfast to its mission as a reflective and learning organization providing “access to innovative, flexible, and quality academic programs that empower people and strengthen communities” (1.1.02 College Mission). This self-study allowed the college to engage in an analytical and forward-thinking process during a time of significant change that served to advance its self-understanding and to identify areas for growth and improvement.

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

SUNY Empire State College was established in 1971 as a distinctive, statewide State University of New York (SUNY) institution focused on innovative teaching and learning, one where faculty mentors guide learners through the design of individualized and structured degree programs. The college has clear and focused statements of mission, vision, and goals that are widely communicated to the college community, providing guidance in the development of plans and goals at all levels of this geographically dispersed institution.

Since its creation, SUNY Empire State College has been committed to providing educational opportunities to diverse and often underserved students. Faculty and staff are deeply committed to the college's mission. The delivery methods and students served reflect this commitment, which is unique in the higher-education landscape. Faculty and staff often report that it is the mission of SUNY Empire State College that attracted them to come in the first place and why they continue to work here. This mission statement concisely articulates the public function and role of the college in offering high-quality degree programs for adult learners. As noted in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report (2.8.09 IFCR) section 3.3, Article 8 of the State Education Law, "State University and State Financial Assistance for Higher Education", Section 352 confirms our status as a public institution and aligns with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #1 and #2," "The institution is authorized or licensed to operate as a postsecondary educational institution and to award postsecondary degrees; it provides written documentation demonstrating both. Authorization or licensure is from an appropriate governmental organization or agency within the Middle States region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as by other agencies as required by each of the jurisdictions, regions, or countries in which the institution operates" and "The institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in its degree programs."

Criterion 1: Clearly defined mission and goals that:

- a. are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement**
- b. address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies**
- c. are approved and supported by the governing body**
- d. guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes**
- e. include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution**
- f. are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders**
- g. are periodically evaluated.**

The college's mission, vision, and strategic goals are periodically evaluated as part of the strategic planning process every five years. The most recent was a multi-year collaborative effort undertaken by a broad array of stakeholders from across the college, and resulted in the college's current strategic plan, "Going for the Gold: Empire State College at 50, 2021 & Beyond" (1.1.01 Going for the Gold). The college's strategic plan, along with updates to the process, are available to the college community, which aligns with the seventh MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #7": "The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education."

SUNY Empire State College utilizes the balanced scorecard method in the development of the strategic plan. This highly participatory process draws upon the broad expertise of the college community and uses cross-functional teams that reflect many voices from across the college. The goal of the balanced scorecard is to make connections between the college's mission and values, our desired outcomes, and our day-to-day projects. This method emphasizes engagement with the entire college community to support continuous improvement of the institution. The revised college mission, vision, and the "Going for the Gold" strategic plan were widely disseminated to the college community and have been included in Town Hall presentations.

SUNY Empire State College's mission, vision, and strategic goals are linked to the needs of its external constituents. Specifically, the college commits to, "expanding access to affordable, high-quality educational opportunities through partnerships with employers, unions, government agencies, the armed forces, community organizations, and other educational institutions" (1.1.02 College Mission). These commitments are aligned with the college's strategic plan's four strategic themes and 15 strategic objectives (1.3.01 SP Tier1 Map March18) The college facilitates this mission with its statewide footprint of more than 30 New York state locations and seven international locations through the college's Center for International Education (1.1.03 ESC Locations; 1.1.04 Center for International Education). Empire State College's partnerships extend the college's mission of access to high-quality education to diverse groups, by creating pathways into the college's programs that allow students to remain fully engaged members of their local communities (1.1.05 Partnership Programs). The college also partners with community colleges across New York state and beyond to provide seamless transfer options for community college students (1.1.06 Community College Pathways). Information pertaining to transfer of credit policies and disclosures regarding articulation agreements and contractual relationships are documented in sections 2 and 7 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Internally, we use the mission, vision, and strategic goals to inform collegewide efforts, as well as academic programs. The mission is a guiding principle for our operational and academic decisions, including those related to planning, resource allocation, and program and curricular development. As stated on the college's website: "These policies, procedures and guidelines align with the mission of the college and have been developed with appropriate consultation across the college" (1.1.07 Policy for Estab Appr Review of Policies).

The process for drafting mission and vision statements was designed to be a collaborative process. To gather input from the college community, a survey was distributed collegewide and 13 focus groups were conducted with faculty, professional employees, and support staff. The results of the survey and focus groups were presented to all college employees during a series of webinars (1.1.08 Strategic Planning Workshop 1). Also, 750 duplicated people participated in workshops and meetings to draft the college's strategic plan in 2017. About 400 people participated specifically in the mission/vision survey and workshops.

The mission, vision, and strategic plan all reinforce the centrality of creative and scholarly inquiry among the college’s faculty. Some of the scholarship of SUNY Empire State College faculty considers the work of mentoring in a changing world that furthers the college’s mission. The college publishes the journal, PLA Inside Out (PLAIO), which is the first scholarly online journal entirely devoted to the recognition and assessment of prior experiential learning (1.1.09 PLAIO). The college also publishes All About Mentoring, a biannual publication that provides opportunities for colleagues from across the college to share scholarly activities, to reflect on ideas and practices about teaching, learning and mentoring, and to think about a range of issues, questions and experiences relevant to our common work (1.1.10 All About Mentoring).

Criterion 2: Institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission;

While there is a college-level strategic plan, referred to as Tier I, each division of the college has developed its own Tier II plan, i.e., Academic Master Plan; Facilities and IT Plans; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan; Enrollment Management Plan; College Campaign; and Strategic Financial Plan. Individual unit strategic plans all serve to support the college’s strategic plan and address specific aspects of each unit.

The college identified four strategic themes or institutional goals. These serve as overarching pillars of our strategic plan and, following the balanced scorecard approach, strategic results were also identified equating with the institutional goals. These are as follows:

Strategic Themes (Institutional Goals)	<i>Student Success</i>	<i>Academic Engagement and Innovation</i>	<i>Expanding Impact and Recognition</i>	<i>Operational Excellence and Sustainability</i>
Strategic Results	Students will leave our institution having had a valuable academic experience through the achievement of college and individualized learning goals.	Engagement activities and innovative projects will be developed, continuously assessed, and scaled to support academic excellence, reflecting the dynamic higher-education environment.	We will be broadly recognized across New York state and around the world as the leading public college for students seeking affordable and flexible, quality degrees.	We will have a culture of continuous improvement and growth that supports operational efficiency, excellent service to all stakeholders, and organizational sustainability.

These institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with the mission of SUNY Empire State College. With a focus on student success, academic engagement, expanded access, and continual improvement, the college provides “innovative, flexible, and quality academic programs that empower people and strengthen communities” (1.1.02 College Mission).

The college’s institutional goals align with Chancellor Johnson’s vision for promoting The State University of New York through individualized education, innovation, and entrepreneurship, including scholarship and research, sustainability, and partnerships (1.2.01 State of the University System 2019).

Criterion 3: Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services, and are consistent with institutional mission.

SUNY Empire State College’s administrative, educational, and student support programs are well aligned with the college’s mission and institutional goals. Services related to student success, academic engagement, innovation, impact and recognition, and operational excellence and sustainability aim to promote the achievement of the college’s mission. There are 15 objectives that relate to the four strategic plan goals (1.3.01 SP Tier1 Map March18). These objectives are balanced across four perspectives (student/stakeholders, financial outcomes, internal processes, and organizational capacity) and help the college operationalize its strategic college goals.

The measurements for each objective help track performance and provide an analytical basis for decision-making. The strategic initiatives are specific strategic projects that will help us improve our performance and make progress on our objectives.

These goals provide the context within which the college creates a respectful and vibrant learning environment. Implementation of these goals is supported by the college through its collaborative mentoring environment, robust student services, a rigorous outcomes assessment process, and ongoing academic and operational review and improvement. The mission further requires the college to create quality academic programs that build on diverse work and life experiences and the personal and professional goals of our students.

Criterion 4: Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.

The college's mission, vision, and goals have been reviewed as part of the strategic planning process. In 2008-09, the college reviewed and refreshed the mission statement as part of the "Vision 2015" strategic planning process. Similarly, as part of "Going for the Gold," the mission statement was revised again in 2016 with input from the entire college community to ensure currency and relevancy (1.1.01 Going for the Gold).

Summary of findings for Standard I

The college has a mission that clearly articulates its purpose and goals and reflects the needs of the diverse student population it serves. Faculty and staff exhibit a deep commitment to the college's mission and its students. This mission is reviewed periodically and revised when appropriate. The college's strategic goals are consistent with the mission and are evaluated to ensure institutional and academic quality improvement.

Strengths and suggestions:

- The college mission is valued by all members of the college community.
- The college has a well-developed strategic plan and should continue its efforts in realizing its overarching themes and objectives.
- The college continues to build community across a distributed campus.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Criterion 1: A commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.

Faculty, staff, and students have the academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression to fully engage in discussions and activities with students in their classes and courses on all matters related to the college learning goals, activities, and subject matter. Their rights and responsibilities are stated in SUNY policies and the agreement between United University Professionals (UUP) and the state of New York (2.1.01 SUNY Trustees Policies pg. 20; 2.1.02 UUP Agreement Article 9).

SUNY Empire State College has integrated these policies into its own policies and Faculty Handbook. That document's language on academic freedom and intellectual property rights can be found in Part II.G (2.1.03 Faculty Handbook Part II G, pg. 16). Faculty members who develop content related to their teaching, mentoring, and research as part of their regular obligations retain their full intellectual property rights. The college also has the right to use these faculty- and staff-developed materials as specified by SUNY Board of Trustees policies (2.1.04 SUNY Trustees Policies pg. 25).

The college also complies with the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), and this compliance is recognized in the college's Copyright Policy (2.1.05 DMCA Library; 2.1.06 Copyright Policy). Per the requirements of the DMCA, a college designee receives claims of copyright infringement and take-down requests, and the library's information page helps faculty and staff understand and apply the DMCA (2.1.05 DMCA Library).

The Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation and librarians have facilitated webinars informing faculty of these policies and their practical application. In addition, the college has instituted processes to make certain that copyright is respected in the development of all course materials. For online courses, professional employees check for copyright issues prior to approving a master course for use. Guidelines for intellectual property is articulated through official college materials (2.1.03 Faculty Handbook Part II G, pg. 16; 2.1.05 DMCA Library; 2.1.06 Copyright Policy). In addition, the college supports the development of open access materials consistent with the SUNY Policy of Open Access (2.1.07 Open Access Policy). This policy provides faculty, staff, and students the ability to opt in, while at the same time protect their intellectual property through copyright and/or creative common license.

The college's copyright policy also reinforces the intellectual property rights of students in the context of materials created for class assignments (2.1.06 Copyright Policy). The Institutional Federal Compliance Report affirms that the college's Student Consumer Information webpage contains links for students and the public to easily find information on copyright policies (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information).

The college demonstrates its commitment to academic integrity through its Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures (2.1.09 Academic Honesty Policy). These policies and procedures hold students accountable for honest academic work and provide procedures for the fair and equitable handling of a breach of these expectations, while granting faculty discretion in determining outcomes. Faculty have been encouraged to include academic integrity statements in their learning contracts/syllabi. Academic support professionals and library staff have facilitated workshops for faculty on how to promote integrity in student work and for students on what academic integrity means (3.4.05 Academic Support). Faculty and representatives from the Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI) have offered webinar series for faculty aimed at improving the design of learning activities and learning contracts/syllabi that support creative student learning and minimize possibilities of plagiarism. Resources on the college's website provide students with opportunities to further their understanding of academic integrity, as well as provide the policies and procedures for violations (2.1.09 Academic Honesty Policy; 2.1.10 Citing Your Sources Library). Violations of the academic honesty policy for the School for Undergraduate Studies are tracked by the Office of Student Academic Services; School for Graduate Studies violations are tracked by the director of student and academic services; and in the School of Nursing and Allied Health violations are tracked by the coordinator of student services. If the violation is repeated or particularly egregious an Academic Appeals and Honesty Committee made up of faculty from each school/program is convened to determine sanctions, if appropriate.

The college is committed to advancing research conducted by faculty in a manner that meets the highest ethical standards. The college has signed an assurance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Human Research Protections, agreeing to follow all federal guidelines. Research involving human subjects requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Faculty and students submitting IRB proposals for review are required to complete an online training for protecting human subjects (2.1.11 CITI Training IRB). The college's IRB reviews and oversees applications for faculty research requests and addresses any issues that might arise related to research integrity as it relates to the protection of human subjects. The board is comprised of faculty from undergraduate and graduate schools, as well as one member from outside the college. Final approvals on IRB applications for research are provided by the IRB and reviewed by the provost or designee. Information on the IRB approval process and responsible conduct in research is provided on our website. (2.1.12 Protection of Human Subjects IRB; 2.1.11 CITI Training IRB).

Criterion 2: A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

SUNY Empire State College's mission and vision speaks to its role as a public institution that seeks to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population across New York state. The mission statement references the college's founding as a higher-education institution providing adult learners with access to innovative, rigorous, and flexible academic programs. The College Learning Goals Policy reiterates these values in the specific competencies that students should meet while earning their degrees. These include engaging in ethical reasoning, as well as reflecting on issues such as social responsibility, democratic citizenship, diversity, and social justice. (1.1.02 College Mission; 2.2.01 Learning Goals Policy).

The college has adopted policies and procedures that foster respect for diversity and support affirmative action. The Office of Human Resources provides oversight on affirmative action. The college's chief diversity officer, a direct report to the president, oversees diversity and inclusion activities and follows procedures that protect faculty and students from discrimination and harassment. In 2017, the college developed a diversity and inclusion plan through the leadership of the chief diversity officer and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (2.2.02 DEI Plan 2017). In 2020, the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion was established and charged with assessing the current diversity and inclusivity climate in real time as issues emerge. This task force also will develop an action plan to enhance existing efforts and recommend the necessary steps to link equity initiatives to SUNY Empire State College's educational mission (2.2.03 Diversity Inclusion Taskforce).

College policies, which parallel SUNY policies and New York state and federal law, support a climate that encourages respect. The college's Affirmative Action Policy was reaffirmed in 2018 by the college's leadership, who confirmed that the policy is in alignment with New York state and federal requirements to provide equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons (2.2.04 Affirmative Action Policy; 2.2.05 Affirmative Action Reaffirmation).

The college's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policy implements SUNY Policies on Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, New York state's "Enough is Enough" law and Title IX (2.2.06 SUNY Guide Article 129-B). Similarly, our Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy explicitly integrates state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment (2.2.07 Non-Discrimination Policy; 2.2.108 Sexual Harassment Policy; 2.2.09 Sexual Violence Policies; 2.2.10 SUNY Sexual Violence Policy 2015; 2.2.11 NYS Senate Bill S5965). Pursuant to a SUNY-wide compliance review with the New York State Office for Civil Rights, in 2015 the college updated its discrimination procedures (2.2.12 Discrimination Complaint Procedures).

The college also has published The Student Conduct Policy, which states:

"sets behavioral standards for Empire State College students and defines the relationship between the college and its students. It affirms values essential to promoting individual intellectual and personal development and for creating an effective learning community. Empire State College expects students to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that is respectful of the rights, well-being, and property of all members of the college community and that supports the college's educational mission" (2.2.13 Undergrad Catalog pg. 94).

It further states that students are expected to:

- Treat students, faculty, and staff at the college with civility and respect
- Represent themselves and any documentation that they may present to the college in an honest manner
- Respect college property and the activities conducted at college facilities or college-sponsored events
- Uphold college policies, SUNY policies, and all applicable law (2.2.14 Undergrad Catalog pg. 96)

Taken together, these policies and procedures help foster a respectful climate among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. The college's Office of Affirmative Action is tasked with "promoting and furthering the college's commitment to diversity and inclusion." In compliance with SUNY's mandate for each campus to have a chief officer for diversity, equity, and inclusion, the college created the position of chief diversity officer. There is also a director of student life and Title IX coordinator who addresses complaints related to affirmative action, discrimination, and Title IX concerns. Our Office of Human Resources addresses these and other concerns raised by employees (2.2.15 Diversity Equity Inclusion). Further, the chief diversity officer has started the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council and the Title IX Awareness and Compliance Committee. These groups have sponsored webinars, distributed information, and ensured that all position vacancies will be published in diverse publications for recruitment of new faculty and staff (2.2.16 Senate Agenda 7-2-18).

Engaged faculty, students, and alumni have sponsored educational and social events around the state intended to promote an inclusive environment. Other committees and departments around the college have been offering programs and projects with the goals of promoting a climate of diversity and inclusion (2.2.17 Latin Beat News Release; 2.2.18 Diversity Forum 2018 video; 2.2.19 Black Male Initiative video). For example, our Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI) has offered webinars in a series on Diversity and Higher Education, including scholars from around the world and a webinar on Incivility in an Online World (August 2018) (2.2.20 Incivility in Online World). As a result of issues being raised in the climate study related to underrepresented minority faculty, the college began a series of discussions with an underrepresented minority faculty group to address more specific concerns. This work began in 2019 with initial steps to better train those in the personnel process on diversity and potential biases.

The Offices of Academic Affairs and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion announced in fall 2019 that the college was awarded funding through SUNY's Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth (PRODiG) initiative. Academic Affairs will conduct seven new faculty searches in the coming year with up to five faculty positions potentially being supported through PRODiG funding (2.2.21 PRODiG Award).

Criterion 3: A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.

College policies provide for the timely and impartial resolution of disputes by students, faculty, or staff. The Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure, Student Grievance Policy and Procedure, and the Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure suggest informal paths of resolutions before the submission of a formal grievance. If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the Office of Student Academic Services will advise students of policies, available on the college webpage, that protect their right to appeal or grieve an academic decision (2.1.09 Academic Honesty Policy; 2.3.01 Student Grievance Policy; 2.3.02 Student Appeals Policy). The director of student life regularly reviews complaints for patterns and improvements.

These policies are reviewed through the college's shared governance process, endorsed by the college Senate and approved by college administration. To ensure an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation, the college has policies that protect students and employees from unlawful discrimination and harassment and establish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of allegations of mistreatment (2.2.08 Sexual Harassment Policy).

College employees can seek redress of grievances through their respective deans, Office of Human Resources, and through channels created by representatives of their unions and the state (2.3.03 UUP Agreement Article 7, p.7; 2.3.04 CSEA NYS Agreement Article 34, p. 107).

The Institutional Federal Compliance Report addresses institutional records of student complaints, noting that all student complaint policies are available on the college's student consumer information webpage. This report also documents that the college's student problem resolution page advises students to contact their local student services professional to attempt conflict resolution, and also presents external resources and contacts one may access, if necessary.

Criterion 4: The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents.

SUNY Empire State College avoids conflict of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest in three ways. Empire State College complies with the policies of the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (2.4.03 JCOPE, Executive Law §94, 2.4.04 JCOPE Jurisdiction and Authority) and the Public Officer's Law (§73). Every new hire signs the oath of office as required by NYS law. College staff who earn an annual salary rate exceeding a certain threshold or hold a policymaking position are required to file an Annual Statement of Financial Disclosure. These employees also receive ethics training every three years which specifically addresses conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest. The college promotes awareness about ethical behavior by citing the NYS code of ethics, as well as the Faculty Handbook (2.1.03 Faculty Handbook Part II G).

The college maintains an internal policy and procedure regarding research and sponsored programs. The Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosure for Sponsored Projects Policy is currently undergoing revision to keep it current with new SUNY Research Foundation policies (2.4.01 Conflict of Interest Policy). The Research Foundation is currently implementing a systemwide pre-award compliance system for tracking sponsored programs with such federal funders as National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, the latter of which is also regulated, in part, by the college's Public Health Service (PHS) Financial Conflict of Interest Procedures. (2.4.02 PHS Conflict of Interest).

Criterion 5: Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.

Every effort is made to yield a diverse pool of applicants and candidates to fill college position vacancies. Open positions are advertised on the college's website and in diverse publications. For executive-level positions, a professional search firm is retained. Nationwide searches occur for faculty, professional employees, and management-confidential positions. Classified employee position vacancies are advertised using the NYS employee lists and qualified candidates are typically vetted by a search committee and the hiring officer.

Faculty and professional employee candidates are interviewed by a search committee and the hiring officer. Candidates for management-confidential and leadership positions are interviewed by larger search committees, which include a representative appointed by the college Senate (2.5.01 College By-Laws). As per the college's by-laws, "When appointments for the positions of senior administrators ... are being contemplated, consultation shall be with the college Senate and with the staff involved."

Prior to participating on a search, all committee members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and participate in search committee training. The questions to be used during the interview of chosen candidates are approved by staff in the Office of Human Resources (HR) to minimize the potential for bias and a common format is used for each particular interview. (2.5.02 Confidentiality and Affirmative Action Agreement; 2.5.03 Permissible Impermissible Questions),

Finalists are invited to an on-campus interview where they have an opportunity to interact with the search committee and other relevant community members. If a presentation is requested, the presentation prompt is the same for all those interviewing for a common position. After all candidates have been interviewed, the search committee submits recommendations to the hiring officer. Once the HR staff ensures that the search has been handled in an appropriate manner and that no conflicts of interest have occurred, an offer of employment is made by the hiring officer. HR has a checklist for search chairs on search processes (2.5.04 Search Process Professional Faculty MC; 2.5.05 Search Process Checklist; 2.5.06 Telephone Reference Check).

Evaluation and promotion of classified, professional, and faculty employees are governed by fair and consistent procedures that derive from policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees and the collective bargaining agreements of SUNY and employee unions. Classified employees receive written evaluations during their probationary period (2.5.07 Classified Probationary Report) and an annual performance program and evaluation (2.5.08 Classified Performance Eval, 2.5.09 Classified Service Reports). Similarly, professional employees discuss with their supervisors a performance program and evaluation on an annual basis (2.5.10 Performance Mgmt for PEs; 2.5.11 Performance Program PE; 2.5.12 Performance Eval PE). Classified and professional employees receive feedback on their performance during these reviews and set goals for the subsequent year.

The procedures for the review of faculty are outlined in the Faculty Handbook (2.5.13 Faculty HB Faculty Review, pages 25-27, 33-35, 39 78-79, Appendix 2; 2.5.14 Part-time Faculty Responsibilities). Decision Support administers and compiles data on Student Assessments of Learning Experience (SALE). The results of these surveys are considered one component of the review procedures for reappointment, continuing appointment, and promotion (2.5.15 Faculty Handbook pg. 43). In addition, candidates under review complete comprehensive portfolios documenting how they meet the criteria for reappointment, continuing appointment, and promotion. The five criteria, set by SUNY, that are addressed in the portfolio include mastery of subject matter, effectiveness in teaching, scholarly ability, effectiveness of university service, and continuing growth.

Federal and state laws, as well as collectively bargained rules, guide policies and procedures related to the discipline and termination/nonrenewal of employees. Written advance notice is required if a separation is necessary (2.5.16 CSEA NYS Agreement Article 33, p. 87; 2.5.17 UUP Agreement Article 19, p. 13; 2.5.18 CSEA NYS Agreement Article 35, p. 112; 2.5.19 UUP Agreement Article 32).

Criterion 6: Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting, and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.

The college has several ways in which it ensures transparent, honest, and truthful communication of information internally and externally. To ensure accuracy and currency, all documents, publications, announcements, and information on the college's website are reviewed on an ongoing basis and revised and updated as needed. Pursuant to Student Right to Know obligations, the Office of Decision Support annually affirms that institutional disclosures concerning graduation, completion and other data are posted on the college's consumer information website (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information). Required disclosures are reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

The representation of the college on its website and, in general, on the internet follows the Web Presence and Publishing Policy (2.6.01 Web Policy). For internal communication, the college uses SUNY Empire State College's intranet, Exchange, as a vehicle for communicating a range of updates and announcements. To further refine and improve communication within the college, an Internal Communications Committee has been established to gain an understanding from faculty, staff, and students regarding their preferred method(s) for different types of information (2.6.01 Web Policy).

A centralized marketing and communication department helps develop and facilitate consistent messaging across marketing efforts. The marketing department has developed a detailed business process map to guide the approval processes for all external marketing communications (2.6.02 OCM Marketing Process). The vetting of external marketing materials for accuracy and truthful representation occurs through consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Marketing and recruitment materials that show accreditation status with the Commission and any other USDE approved agencies are summarized in section 5.2 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. Additionally, section 7 of the compliance report describes the disclosure of information concerning current contractual relationships available on the college's website.

Criterion 7: As appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place:

a. promote affordability and accessibility

b. enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.

Information regarding tuition and fees (2.7.01 Tuition Rates), sources of financial aid (2.7.02 Financial Aid Programs), and accessibility services (2.7.03 Accessibility Resources and Services) are available to students on the college's website. Any increase in tuition and fees is communicated via the website and by email to students, including prospective students whose information is in the recruitment database. The college policies and procedures align with federal and state financial aid guidelines and are documented in section 5.1 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

SUNY Empire State College is committed to helping students understand not just the cost of their program of study, but the many sources of aid available to them. The college utilizes the SUNY Net Price Cost Calculator, a free online tool that estimates financial aid available for students who plan to submit FAFSA applications (2.7.04 Net Price Calculator). The financial aid office provides additional educational resources, including an interactive online financial literacy program, for students who wish to improve their money-management skills. These and other resources are collected for student review and use on a consumer information page (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information).

Students may apply for scholarships, grants, and loans from a variety of sources described on the college's financial aid website (2.7.06 Financial Aid Programs and Eligibility). Women, minorities, veterans, and military personnel are directed to additional funding sources focused on serving their populations, for example, Financial Aid: Women and Minorities (2.7.07 Financial Aid for Women and Minorities). Students can apply for scholarships through the SUNY Empire State College Foundation Application for Scholarships tool (2.7.08 ESCEFAST Scholarship Opportunities). Additional information on financing one's education is available via 1 Stop Student Services, which provides students with reliable information to succeed in the business of being a SUNY Empire State College student (2.7.09 One Stop Student Services).

Criterion 8: Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:

- a. the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates**
- b. the institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation**
- c. substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion**
- d. the institution's compliance with the Commission's policies.**

The college's Office of Decision Support collects, analyzes, and disseminates information to support institutional planning, decision-making, and reporting at SUNY Empire State College. Decision Support consists of five functional areas (2.8.01 Decision Support):

- Institutional Research
- Accreditation
- Outcomes Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Business Analytics
 - data warehousing
 - information-management initiatives
 - decision-making data

Institutional Research maintains responsibility for most SUNY, state, and federally mandated reporting obligations, including Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting.

The required disclosures of graduation, completion, and other data required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, Student Right to Know, and policies on student academic progress, withdrawal, leave of absence, and attendance are curated and centrally accessible to the public, as documented in sections 3 and 5 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. The college annually presents data regarding graduation and retention rates in multiple places that includes the School for Undergraduate Studies Catalog (2.7.05 Undergrad Catalog pg. 24), consumer information page, and Decision Support Fact Book (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information; 2.8.01 Decision Support; 2.8.02 Fact Book 2017-2018). SUNY Empire State College discloses institution-wide assessments on Decision Support's website (2.8.03 GEAR Reports; 2.8.05 AOSR Reports; 2.8.04 AITM Reports) and are available to SUNY system administration upon request. The college also has published policies regarding grading and evaluations of undergraduate programs, policies, and procedures for individualized prior learning assessments, and policies and procedures for degree program and portfolio reviews (2.8.06 UG Grading Policy; 2.8.07 iPLA Policy and Procedure; 2.8.08 Degree Program Approval Policy). The above clearly demonstrates alignment with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #8," "The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes."

The Institutional Federal Compliance Report (2.8.09 IFCR) affirms institutional standing with New York state, as well as other accrediting agencies, where applicable. This is documented in section 6 of this report. This is aligned with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #5," "The institution complies with all applicable government (usually federal and state) laws and regulations." In addition, the institution is aligned with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation and MSCHE policies. This is aligned with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #6," "The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website, www.msche.org."

The college follows the appropriate procedural steps for substantive changes, as laid out in MSCHE resources (2.8.10 MSCHE Substantive Change Policy). The nature of substantive changes that have been requested and approved typically are those related to the opening, closure, and relocation of sites. These types of substantive changes align with ESC's commitment to serving New York state's population needs. The Middle States Commission has documented that the college has notified it of these and similar actions (2.8.11 MSCHE Accreditation Actions). All communications to MSCHE are aligned with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #4," "The institution's representatives communication with the Commission in English, both orally and in writing."

The accreditation liaison officer (ALO) at SUNY Empire State College is responsible for staying current on MSCHE policies and ensuring that the college remains in compliance with policy changes. The ALO attends the annual MSCHE conference and participates in MSCHE trainings. The provost regularly serves on or chairs Middle States teams. These activities maintain a high level of engagement with Middle States aligning with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #14", "The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicated any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities."

Criterion 9: Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

Overall, the institution is committed to periodic assessment. Local and collegewide governance meetings, task forces, strategic planning initiatives, and consultative bodies all provide ongoing opportunities for assessment and improvement of policies, procedures, and practices. The college sponsors internal investigations of its effectiveness in meeting SUNY educational requirements, and state and federal regulations on hiring and diversity. In addition, the college's Business Office maintains internal controls related to procurement, spending, and voucher reimbursement, and faculty and professional travel. The college's Enterprise Risk Management group assesses institutional practices and processes. The manner in which policies are reviewed and revised is guided by the Policy for the Establishment, Approval, and Review of Policies (2.9.01 Policy Establishment Approval Review).

Summary of findings for Standard II

The college community demonstrates a strong commitment to its mission. Through its interactions and activities, SUNY Empire State College engages in practices that are ethical, truthful, and respectful. The college's commitment to academic and intellectual freedom is evident in its policies, and its practices support a climate of respect and engagement. The college has systems in place to comply with all requirements, honor its commitments, and represent itself truthfully.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has a strong commitment to ethical practices, and maintaining compliance at the local, state, and federal levels.
- The institutional climate was impacted by the transition to ESC 2.0. The college should continue its efforts to understand the issues and identify solutions.
- The college successfully received funding from SUNY to increase the number of historically underrepresented faculty through the PRODiG initiative. SUNY Empire State College is committed to increasing diversity across the college

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations. An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

Criterion 1: Certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or other credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning.

SUNY Empire State College offers five undergraduate degrees in 12 registered areas of study and six registered programs (3.1.01 Undergraduate Degrees). Degree options include: an Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), and Bachelor of Professional Studies (B.P.S.) (not available in all areas of study). Within each broad area of study, students design individualized concentrations that address their academic, professional, and personal needs.

The college offers three undergraduate certificates that support specific career trajectories and are designed to integrate seamlessly into a registered area of study. Currently, students may choose from certificates in Business and Environmental Sustainability, Manufacturing Management, or Healthcare Management (3.1.02 BES Certificate; 3.1.03 Manufacturing Mgmt Certificate; 3.1.04 Healthcare Mgmt Certificate).

To foster a coherent learning experience, undergraduate students engage in a credit-bearing educational planning study in which they learn how a degree is structured, determine how prior learning fits into their degree, and plan the studies needed to complete the degree. Students work with a faculty mentor to clarify their educational goals, decide on a learning path, and create a degree plan of study that matches their goals within the context of larger academic and professional expectations. Students prepare a rationale essay that documents synthesis, integration, and progression of their degree plan. Each degree program and rationale essay is reviewed and approved by a faculty academic review committee that ensures that the appropriate standards are met, including degree guidelines developed by SUNY Empire State College and requirements established by The State University of New York (3.1.05 Student Degree Planning Guide).

The School for Graduate Studies offers 14 master's degree programs and 26 advanced certificate programs (3.1.06 Grad Masters Degrees). There are also 11 combined bachelor's/master's degrees for interested and academically prepared students (3.1.07 Combined Bachelors Masters Degrees). Primarily online, these graduate offerings ensure the personal guidance and ongoing, interactive support that today's adult students require. Programs' foci include business, management, leadership, and education, as well as more flexible learning opportunities offered in the Liberal Arts and Science Programs (3.1.08 Grad BML Programs; 3.1.09 Grad Ed Programs; 3.1.10 Grad Lib Arts and Science Programs).

SUNY Empire State College graduate opportunities are approved by and registered with the New York State Education Department. The college completed a self-study and proposal to register a new doctoral program and to amend the institution's master plan in order to expand the level of academic offerings. The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Change has been approved at all levels of review internally, at SUNY system administration, and the State Education Department has indicated approval pending the review of a faculty hire. The new degree level also needs to be approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees and the governor of New York state.

Many of the SUNY Empire State College graduate degrees and certificates have received accreditation in recognition of the quality and relevance of these offerings.

Some of these include:

- International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE)
- Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP)
- Project Management Institute (PMI)

The Framework for Graduate Program Review policy governs and outlines the evaluation of each graduate degree program with respect to academic quality, program goals/college mission alignment, relevance to student demands, and consideration for program resources (3.1.11 Graduate Program Review).

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and Bachelor of Science in Allied Health (3.1.12 SONAH website; 3.1.13 SONAH Viewbook). The RN-B.S.N. program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). In addition, SONAH offers one Master of Science degree program, with tracks in administration and nursing education. SUNY ESC's SONAH degrees provide B.S.N.-prepared, licensed registered nurses with an opportunity to earn a graduate degree in nursing that will prepare them to become leaders and educators in a complex health-care environment. In 2019, a substantive change report was submitted prior to offering a new graduate certificate program, the postgraduate Certificate in Nursing Education. This certificate was developed to address current and future shortage of nurse-educators in New York state and nationwide.

The Institutional Federal Compliance Report provides evidence affirming state authorization and program registration, as well as disclosures on standing with the accrediting agencies identified above (see section 6).

SUNY Empire State College maintains more than 100 agreements with academic, community, labor, and corporate partners, and the United States Coast Guard (1.1.05 Partnership Programs; 3.1.14 IFTI IUPUT MOU; 3.1.15 Univ of West Indies MOU; 3.1.16 Long Island Railroad MOU; 3.1.17 Coast Guard MOU; 3.1.18 Partnership Tracking). Community college and academic partnerships create transfer pathways through formal articulation agreements that expand student opportunity and educational access. These agreements are created to facilitate cross-institution communication, delineate student transfer requirements, and maximize the transfer of credit between institutions. The college's agreements are tracked, updated, and revised as changes in industries and academia arise. Information pertaining to transfer of credit policies and disclosures regarding articulation agreements and contractual relationships are documented in sections 2 and 7 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. In addition, the college has a process for assigning credit to courses consistent with promoting individualized education, documented in section 8 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Overall, the institution is aligned with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #9," "The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate of degree level or delivery and instructional modality."

Criterion 2: Student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals who are:

- rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies
- qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do
- sufficient in number
- provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation
- reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures;

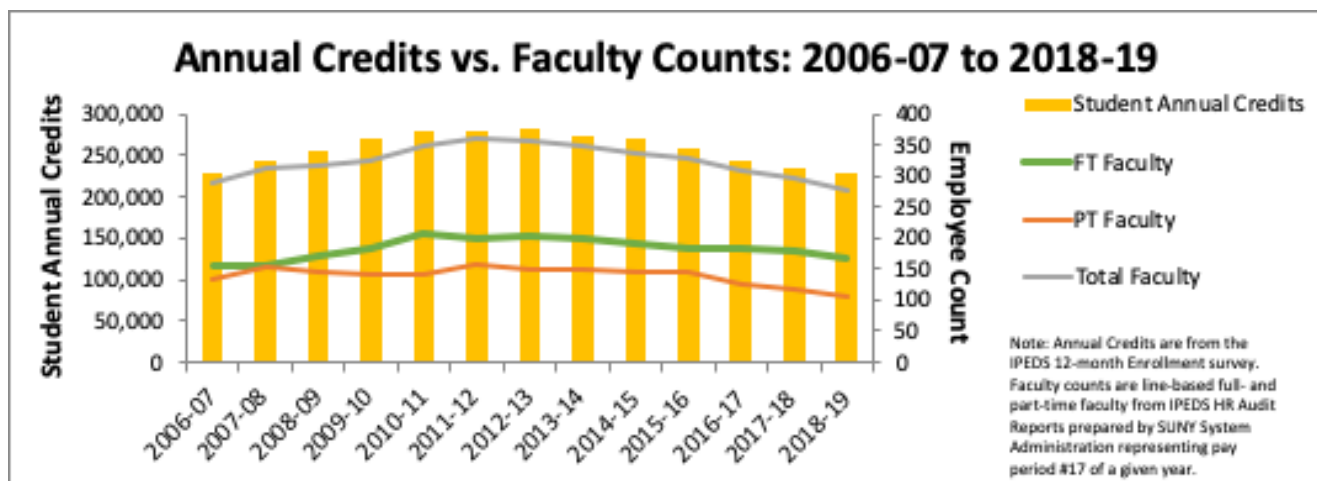
Student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty and professionals who are committed to excellence in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service. Criteria for the review of faculty align with this commitment, and a student-centered focus is evident in the college's Vision Statement:

"SUNY Empire State College will be the leading public college for students across New York state and around the world seeking affordable and flexible, quality degrees. We will be distinguished by our outstanding faculty and staff, our record of student success, our innovative programs and personalized learning opportunities, our rich continuum of student support services, our social and economic impact, and our commitment to a diverse and engaged academic community" (1.1.02 College Mission).

Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty must hold a Ph.D. or the equivalent to a terminal degree in their academic field. Tenure-track faculty go through a hiring process that examines the academic qualifications, while ensuring that candidate's experiences and qualifications are aligned to the mission of the college (3.2.01 Faculty Handbook pg. 23). More than 95% of the tenured and tenure-track faculty have Ph.D.s or equivalent (3.2.02 Terminal Degree Summary 2018-19), which aligns with MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #15": "The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs."

To address capacity issues for high-enrollment studies/courses or specialized knowledge, the college utilizes part-time faculty and adjunct instructors. Adjunct instructor qualifications are initially reviewed by the faculty academic coordinators or associate department chairs and qualified applications are sent to the department chair and approved by the dean. Part-time faculty are reviewed at their initial appointment by the respective department chairs, deans, and the provost (3.2.03 FAC Position Description; 3.2.04 ADC Roles).

Faculty numbers have fluctuated over the past 10 years, with changes paralleling enrollment growth (2006-2012) and decline (2013-2018) as noted in the graph below (3.2.05 Faculty Count and Enrollment). With declining enrollments, the college has protected faculty lines, and the loss of faculty has occurred primarily through attrition. Along with collective bargaining rules, this has caused some unevenness by location and school, which is being examined and addressed through strategic hiring and replacement. The charts below show the number of line-based faculty over the past 13 years and the number of students. Faculty hiring is complex at SUNY Empire State College, as deans manage both disciplinary perspectives and location or online service needs. In 2019, the SUNY chancellor and NYS governor created a significant program, Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (3.2.06 SUNY PRODiG), to invest in the diversity of faculty and women in STEM. The college successfully received funding to hire five additional faculty each year over three years. This investment will diversify the college's faculty.



All faculty are reviewed on an annual basis by their academic supervisors to examine progress over the previous year and set goals for the upcoming academic year. In addition, all full-time, tenure-track faculty are periodically reviewed by their departmental peers, academic personnel committee (APC), dean, provost, and president. Full-time tenure-track faculty must address all five general criteria (i.e., mastery of subject matter, effectiveness in teaching, scholarly ability, effectiveness of university service, and continuing growth) as set forth by The State University of New York Board of Trustees policies. Faculty on continuing appointment are reviewed on a three-year cycle (3.2.07 Faculty Handbook Appendix 2; 3.2.08 SUNY Trustees Policies Article XII; 3.2.09 Faculty Handbook pgs. 25-27). Part-time faculty are reviewed at least once every three years and address those criteria pertinent to their appointment, including mastery of subject matter, effectiveness in teaching, scholarly ability, effectiveness of university service, and continuing growth.

Faculty reviews are also informed by students' assessment of their learning experiences. In an agreement between United University Professions (UUP) union and college administration, the Student Assessment of Learning Experiences (SALE) instrument solicits student input in courses, educational planning, and overall mentoring (3.2.10 SALE Instruments). The SALE for courses is administered for all credit-bearing studies. The SALE for educational planning is administered when a student is registered for educational planning, and the SALE for mentoring is administered to mentees who have been enrolled in the college within the past two years and have been assigned to the faculty mentor for no fewer than 90 days.

SUNY Empire State College participates in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey administered by Harvard University. The results of the fall 2017 survey indicate that line-based faculty are clear about the tenure criteria and process compared to the benchmark score (3.2.11 COACHE Faculty Survey pg. 20). Tenured faculty ratings of promotion, tenure, and reappointment expectations were lower than the benchmark score. The Office of Academic Affairs is considering these findings and working on ways to improve the promotion, tenure, and reappointment process. This has included joint webinars and presentations with the Academic Personnel Committee and the Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI).

Faculty have 12-month appointments, with year-round opportunities to engage in scholarly and creative work and develop new professional competencies. For example, the college has a commitment to faculty for scheduled reading periods and no-appointment periods, which allow engagement in service and scholarly activities.

Faculty are supported through the college's Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI). CMLAI provides many opportunities for faculty to explore and examine mentoring and teaching at Empire State College. A few of these opportunities include:

- Collegewide Conversations (e.g., grading and evaluation, mentoring at a distance, eight-week courses) (3.2.12 Collegewide Conversations)
- Orientation to Teaching Online
- Institute on Mentoring and Teaching Summer Residency (3.2.13 IMTL Summer Residency)
- Mentoring Orientation (3.2.14 New Mentor Orientation)
- Additional Programs and Services (3.2.15 CMLAI Programs and Services)

There are several funded professional development opportunities managed by CMLAI, some of which are illustrated in the table below. In addition, there is the Joint Labor Management agreement between New York state and the United University Professions (UUP) to offer individual development awards. Each campus is allocated grant money based on the number of ESC employees represented by UUP.

Programs	Purpose	Award	Eligibility
Professional Development Reassignment	For pursuit of “college-related projects.”	Partial release from teaching and mentoring.	Full-time faculty not on temporary assignment.
Arthur Imperatore Community Forum Fellowship	For support of a major community-related research or artistic activity that culminates in a community forum or other public and professional dissemination.	.70 faculty release time for one year and other project costs up to \$10,000. Endowed fellowship through the SUNY Empire State College Foundation.	Must be a “full-time mentor.”
Drescher Award (Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Affirmative Action/ Diversity Leave Program)	Consideration is given to areas of scholarship and mastery of specialization.	Half-year, full-time leave with full salary.	Pre-tenure faculty and pre-permanency professionals represented by United University Professions (UUP), with preference given to minorities, women, employees with disabilities, or an employee with military status.
Susan H. Turben Chair in Mentoring	Awarded each year to a SUNY Empire State College faculty member “who demonstrates the capacity to advance scholarship and best practice in mentoring.”	“.50 reduction in teaching load, a stipend, and funds for research and dissemination of the outcomes of the project.	“Candidates may be promising mentors in their early years at the college, as well as more experienced mentors.”
Keep-Mills Research Grant	The exploration of interdisciplinary themes and approaching ideas and problems from a “range of interpretive vantage points.”	Awards up to \$2,500.	ESC mentors.
Scholars Across the College	To share ideas, research, creative work, reading, writing, and professional activities across the college.	Honorarium and funding for two mentors to travel to various college locations. No release time is granted.	Mentors .50 and above.
Faculty Development Funds	For courses, conferences, and workshops.	Awards up to \$1,300 based on type of activity.	All UUP faculty.

Additionally, there is funding for professional development activities, available to faculty .50 and above:

- Joint Labor-Management Individual Development Awards: Available to both part-time and full-time members of the bargaining unit, also referred to as UUP/IDA funding.
- Sabbatical Leaves: Available (full year and half year) for those full-time faculty who have earned continuing appointment/tenure.
- CMLAI Reassignments: Available for full-time faculty; a .25 release time following the pattern of college reassignments, as noted above.
- CMLAI Faculty Associate: Available for full-time faculty; a .50 release time from regular mentoring responsibilities to focus on various aspects of teaching and learning; also includes a commitment to be part of the CMLAI team for one year.
- All About Mentoring: An opportunity for all colleagues to publish writings relevant to their professional development, issues of teaching, mentoring and learning; published twice/year.
- Institute on Mentoring, Teaching, and Learning: Available for full- and part-time mentors, academic administrators, and academic professionals to pursue an individual or group project relevant to their teaching and mentoring.
- Open Mic on Mentoring Practices: An opportunity for all colleagues connected to teaching and learning at ESC to share ideas, cases, questions, and challenges relevant to their practices; meets noon-1 p.m., typically on three Thursdays/month.
- CMLAI-Reading group: An opportunity, typically once per month, to meet via SKYPE to discuss a text recommended by a colleague about some aspect of teaching, learning, and mentoring.
- Webinar Series: An opportunity sponsored by CMLAI for colleagues to share ongoing research, thinking, experimenting with members of the college community; arranged on a periodic basis based on topic/interest/value.
- PILLARS (Promoting Innovative Learners, Leaders and Academic Research Scholars grant): This is a collegewide grant opportunity for funding up to \$3,500; open to tenured and tenure-track faculty (3.2.16 PILLARS Application).

Faculty have support, consultative services, and professional development from curriculum and instructional designers, educational technologists, academic support professionals, librarians, and accessibility services professionals throughout course development, revision, and instruction.

Criterion 3: Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.

Undergraduate and graduate programs are clearly and accurately described on the college's website (3.1.01 Undergraduate Degrees; 3.1.06 Grad Masters Degrees; 3.1.12 SONAH Website). Detailed, published program catalogs are also available for online viewing and download. (3.3.01 Undergrad Catalog; 3.3.02 SONAH Catalog; 3.3.03 Graduate Catalog). The Prior Learning Assessment Guide and the Student Degree Planning Guide provide detailed information about designing degree programs and related processes (3.3.04 iPLA Guide; 3.1.05 Student Degree Planning Guide). The above materials can be found on the Student MyESC Homepage (3.3.05 MyESC Portal Student).

Information sessions, orientations, and dedicated mentors provide support toward helping students understand degree and program requirements and expected time to completion. Additionally, 1 Stop Student Services holds chat sessions that provide students with real-time help, staff-dedicated email, and phone lines for further support (2.7.09 One Stop Student Services).

Time to completion varies by the number of advanced-standing credits students bring with them to the college, including transfer credit and credit for prior learning. The college's average bachelor's degree-seeking student graduates in 2.8 years (3.3.06 Time to Degree 2009-2018). The college complies with disclosure requirements as defined by Student Right to Know and further outlined by Section 5 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Criterion 4: Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress.

SUNY Empire State College provides flexible learning opportunities and robust support resources. The college offers various study options, such as fully online courses, blended studies, face-to-face study groups, residencies, and independent studies. The college's procedures used to ensure student identity in distance learning courses is described in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. The term listing for Fall and Spring typically have more than 1,700 sections with approximately half for the summer term. The catalog has more than 2,500 different courses spanning all programs (1.1.04 Center for International Education; 3.4.01 Ways to Study; 3.4.02 Immersive Cloud Learning; 3.4.03 Catalogs and Guides; 1.1.03 ESC Locations).

Every student is assigned a mentor or advisor who provides guidance from orientation through graduation. Students, with the support of their mentor/advisor, review their prior learning and transfer credits to develop degree programs. Mentors also help students with course sequencing and managing their work with other faculty. In addition, students work with course faculty through office appointments, phone, email, and the college's Learning Management System (3.4.04 Faculty Mentors).

The college employs approximately 40 staff in Student Success who support and guide students in the roles of academic support, accessibility resources and services, student life, student success and development, and student academic services. In addition, the college is developing an Educational Opportunity Program. The resources supported by these groups include tutoring services, both onsite and online. Students have access to writing assistance, located on the MyESC Student Academic Support page (3.4.05 Academic Support), through in-person writing centers, online writing resources, and the SUNY Empire State College-created assignment calculator and thesis generator. The college also offers academic support and workshops to strengthen students' study skills. For students with other academic needs, English-Language Learners/English as a Second Language (ELL/ESL) assistance is also available (3.4.06 ELL ESL). The online library offers varied resources to support student research and learning. Librarians are available through a virtual chat to answer questions in real time and provide resources related to research instruction, information literacy resources, subject guides, and, in collaboration with faculty, course guides. The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services offers equal opportunity for SUNY Empire State College students with disabilities. Such students receive reasonable accommodations, which include alternatively formatted books, accommodations for online courses, and general support for success in students' day-to-day interactions with the college (3.4.07 Student Affairs; 3.4.08 Learning Support; 3.4.06 ELL ESL; 3.4.09 Library; 2.7.03 Accessibility Resources and Services).

Students are eligible to participate in the Student Academic Conference and Student Wellness Retreat, along with applying for various internships, awards, and fellowships (3.4.10 Fall Student Conference; 3.4.11 Student Wellness Retreat 2018; 3.4.12 Internships; 3.4.13 Awards and Fellowships). The college provides student computer labs at many of its locations across the state. These labs give students the opportunity to use up-to-date hardware, software, and printers. In addition, students have access to technological support seven days per week (3.4.14 ITS Service Desk).

Criterion 5: At institutions that offer undergraduate education, a general education program, freestanding, or integrated into academic disciplines, that:

- a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field.
- b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.
- c. in non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills.

SUNY Empire State College's "Breadth of Degree Programs" and SUNY's General Education Requirements Policy states, "As a college of arts and sciences, Empire State College expects students to acquire the qualities of a broadly educated person." The college fully implemented the general education program mandated by the SUNY Board of Trustees. The college adopted the SUNY requirement that all bachelor's and associate degree candidates complete a general education program of no fewer than 30 credit hours designed to achieve student learning in at least seven out of 10 knowledge and skill areas (with mathematics and basic communication being required) and two areas of competency infused throughout the curriculum (3.5.01 General Education Requirements; 3.5.02 SUNY GenEd Course Guidelines).

The SUNY General Education requirements are as follows:

1. Mathematics (required)

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models, such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics
- represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically and verbally
- employ quantitative methods, such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, or statistics to solve problems
- estimate and check mathematical results for reasonableness
- recognize the limits of mathematical and statistical methods.

2. Natural Sciences

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis
- application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

3. Social Sciences

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis
- knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

4. American History

Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of a basic narrative of American history – political, economic, social, and cultural, including knowledge of unity and diversity in American society
- knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups
- understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.

5. Western Civilization

Students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of the development of the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of Western civilization
- relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world.

6. Other World Civilizations

Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of either a broad outline of world history, or
- knowledge of the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of one non-Western civilization.

7. Humanities

Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the SUNY General Education Requirements.

8. The Arts

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

9. Foreign Language

Students will demonstrate:

- basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a foreign language
- knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

10. Basic Communication (required)

Students will:

- produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms
- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts
- research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details
- develop proficiency in oral discourse
- evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria.

Competencies

The following two competencies should be infused throughout the SUNY General Education Requirements:

1. Critical Thinking (reasoning)

Students will:

- identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work
- develop well-reasoned arguments.

2. Information Management

Students will:

- perform the basic operations of personal computer use
- understand and use basic research techniques
- locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

All undergraduate students are offered the opportunity to fulfill the General Education requirements through transfer credits, standardized exams, prior learning, cross-registrations, and/or SUNY Empire State College courses (3.5.05 Attempted Credits GenEd). Academic schools and departments have ongoing discussions of general education issues and foster the development of new, innovative, rigorous, and socially relevant courses that fulfill general education requirements. All courses that fulfill a general education designation go through a rigorous approval process starting at the department level, reviewed by the specific general education curriculum committee, and confirmed at the SUNY level. Degree planning materials clearly explain these requirements and students can see which general education requirements, if any, a course fulfills by looking at the syllabus or term guide description. Students also can search the catalog and term guide for a listing of courses that meet specific general education requirements (3.3.05 MyESC Portal Student; 3.5.03 Developing Your Degree Program).

SUNY Empire State College collects direct and indirect evidence about the impact of the general education program. The General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) process, which began in 2003, is a direct assessment of student work in general education. The college developed a plan for assessing outcomes of general education, following guidelines set by SUNY system administration. These assessments focus primarily on the direct assessment of samples of student work. For example, the GEAR assessments stimulated discussion of college-level writing skills, with the aim of fostering more awareness and agreement on how best to serve students at all writing skill levels. Additionally, the GEAR rubric in basic communication has been adopted by many faculty as a way of conveying college expectations about writing to students (2.8.03 GEAR Reports).

The SUNY Student Opinion Survey asks students to assess the extent to which they believe they have attained certain learning objectives, including those related to general education. Results of the Student Opinion Survey attest to the effectiveness of the general education program. Among the state-operated campuses, SUNY Empire State College ranked first on a variety of items measuring student satisfaction, including the quality of instruction, being intellectually stimulated by the material covered in class, receiving feedback (written or oral), the acquisition of analytical thinking skills, acquiring knowledge and skills for further academic study, and acquiring knowledge and skills for intellectual growth throughout life (3.5.04 Student Opinion Comparison).

Faculty committees review and approve every undergraduate degree program plan and there is regular discussion of general education. The General Education program allows students to explore a wide range of areas that are outside their areas of study. This allows students to expand their cultural sensitivity and prepares them to be critical thinkers.

Criterion 6: In institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula.

SUNY Empire State College's School for Graduate Studies (SGS) offers 14 master's programs and 26 advanced certificate programs (3.1.06 Grad Masters Degrees). In addition, 11 combined bachelor's/master's degrees also are offered to highly qualified, current Empire State College students (3.1.07 Combined Bachelor's/Masters Degrees).

The SGS has two accredited programs. The teacher preparation programs (MAT in Middle Childhood and Adolescence Education, MAT in Special Education, and M.Ed. in Special Education) are accredited by the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) for a period of seven years, December 2019-December 2026 (3.6.01 AAQEP). The Business, Management, and Leadership Division's Master of Business Administration in Business Management is accredited through the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) for a period of seven years from April 2013 - December 2020 (3.6.02 IACBE). The division will be adding its MBA in Healthcare Leadership and M.S. in Finance programs to its IACBE accreditation during its 2020 reaffirmation. Evidence affirming the college's standing with each of its specialized accreditors is presented in section 6 of the Institutional Federal Compliance.

The MBA in Business Management is recognized by the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) as being in complete alignment with the professional competencies outlined by SHRM. In addition, SUNY Empire State College is recognized as a registered education provider (REP) by the Project Management Institute (PMI) and meets PMI's rigorous quality criteria for course content, instructor qualification, and instructional design.

Each degree program is designed, revised, and facilitated by the School for Graduate Studies (SGS) faculty. All full-time and part-time faculty who teach in the School for Graduate Studies and its teacher preparation programs are required to meet the program's rigorous credentials. All full-time graduate faculty hold doctorates in their field. All part-time and adjunct faculty hold at least a master's degree and an additional 18 credits of graduate coursework or a master's degree and a relevant professional credential. All full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty who teach pedagogical courses or supervise field experiences in the teacher preparation program are required to have at least a master's degree plus 18 credits and at least three years of full-time teaching experience. A qualifying professional credential such as National Board Certification may be substituted for the 18 credits beyond the master's degree. To accommodate the higher research expectation for graduate faculty, they have a reduced teaching expectation compared to undergraduate faculty.

The School for Graduate Studies ensures academic excellence and consistency across all departmental graduate programs by aligning policies and standards with its primary governing body, the Graduate Studies and Policies Committee (GSPC). The responsibilities of GSPC include graduate academic policy, new graduate programs, revised graduate program guidelines, curricula and requirements, program assessment reviews and plans, and any collegewide assessments that affect graduate programs, admission policy, or changes to the academic calendar that affect the quality of the academic program (3.6.03 Bylaws 2019-2020; 3.1.11 Graduate Program Review).

Approvals for new graduate programs and major changes to existing programs go through a rigorous process that includes GSPC, the dean of graduate programs, and the provost. If significant changes are made, then further approvals are necessary from the SUNY Empire State College president, SUNY provost, and NYS Education Department (NYSED).

SUNY Empire State College's School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) offers two Bachelor of Science programs (Bachelor of Science in Allied Health, RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing) and one Master of Science program with tracks in nursing administration and nursing education. All of the nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) (3.1.12 SONAH website; 3.6.05 AACN CCNE Accreditation). The nursing program complies with Parts 50 and 52 of the NYS Commissioner of Education regulations for nursing and is in compliance with all of the standards set forth by the specialized accreditation agency, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Verification of continued compliance with the Commissioner of Education regulations is documented in an annual report to the Office of the Professions at the NYS Education Department.

Each degree program is designed, revised, and facilitated by the SONAH faculty who are academically and experientially prepared for the areas in which they teach. All eight faculty have a minimum of a master's degree in nursing, two hold doctoral degrees, and four are pursuing doctoral degrees. In addition, faculty credentials are consistent with the standards of CCNE, NYSED, and the profession.

The School of Nursing and Allied Health ensures academic excellence and consistency across all departmental programs by setting and overseeing policies and standards aligned with the Graduate Studies and Policies Committee (GSPC) for graduate programs and the Undergraduate Committee for Academic Policies (UCAP) for undergraduate programs. Approvals for new SONAH programs and major changes in existing programs go through a rigorous process that includes GSPC (graduate programs), the Committee for Undergraduate Programs (CUP), the dean of SONAH, and the provost. If significant changes are made, further approvals would be necessary from the SUNY Empire State College president, SUNY provost, and NYSED.

Criterion 7: Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.

SUNY Empire State College evaluates several licenses, certificates, and training programs and courses provided by industry, professional organizations, agencies, and companies, and recommends college credit that can be utilized in a degree program. The college also accepts recommended credit for professional learning evaluated by other regionally accredited institutions for which the college has reviewed and approved their review process. (3.7.01 Student Degree Planning Guide Ch14).

SUNY Empire State College has a partnership with the Education and Learning Trust (ELT) of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). In the partnership, the role of the ELT is to develop and deliver graduate-level courses to K-12 teachers represented by NYSUT. The approval process for any student learning opportunity submitted by NYSUT is as follows:

- NYSUT submits the syllabi for potential courses to the School for Graduate Studies Division of Education chair.
- The Education chair assigns two reviewers who review the syllabi to determine if the outcomes, content, and assessments would meet the SGS standards.
- Both reviewers need to approve the course to be accepted.

The SGS has approved 38 NYSUT courses for SUNY Empire State College credit. Students are eligible to utilize nine credits toward the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. In addition, students can apply 12 credits of National Board Certification Prep courses toward the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning, and 12 credits of Students with Disabilities' courses to the M.Ed. in Adolescent Special Education. It should be noted that the ELT courses are not required in any SUNY Empire State College degree program, but instead are an option for completing a portion of the MAT and M.Ed. degrees. The above partnership was submitted as a substantive change request to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and was approved Aug. 31, 2011 (3.7.02 NYSUT ELT Masters Degrees). Commission approval is documented as a component of section 7 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Criterion 8: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

SUNY Empire State College faculty engage in assessment activities that are meaningful and support reflection and action to improve student learning experiences and outcomes. Periodic assessment promotes accountability to external audiences, while engaging and informing faculty for continuous improvement purposes. By doing so, the college is aligned with the MSCHE's "Requirements of Affiliation #10," "Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessment."

In the School for Undergraduate Studies, since students design individualized degree programs with mentors' support, and given the curricular flexibility of Area of Study Guidelines (3.8.01 Area of Study webpage), the review of authentic student work was determined to be the most fitting methodology for directly assessing learning outcomes. Two of the college's three assessment methods, Assessment in the Major (AITM) (2.8.04 AITM Reports) and the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) (2.8.03 GEAR Reports), utilize student work samples as a means to directly assess student learning. A third assessment method, the Area of Study Review (AOSR) (2.8.05 AOSR Reports), examines degree portfolios of graduated students to assess alignment of program design/documentation and academic policies (3.8.02 AOSR Rating Form 2013-14):

- Area of Study (3.8.01 Area of Study webpage)
- Degree program rationale (required per SUNY ESC policy) (3.8.03 Degree Program Rationale Policy)
- College Learning Goals (2.2.01 Learning Goals Policy)
- Prior Learning Credits (3.8.04 Prior Learning Policy)
- Learning Contracts (3.8.05 Learning Contracts Policy)

An outcomes assessment calendar for the School for Undergraduate Studies (SUS) is kept to track assessment timing (3.8.06 Assessment Cycle 2019-2027). In addition, each school in SUS has periodic reports to highlight how faculty are incorporating the findings from assessments into the curriculum. Detailed discussion of assessment activities and outcomes is presented under Standard V, and also are described as a component of course- or program-review procedures and sample approval documentation in section 8 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. Student outcomes data required for public disclosures are systematically reviewed and verified annually by the college's Office of Decision Support. This is affirmed in section 5.3 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

The School for Graduate Studies programmatic assessment process is guided by the Framework for Graduate Program Review Policy (3.1.11 Graduate Program Review). The process involves both annual and quinquennial reviews. The quinquennial reviews are an all-encompassing evaluation of a program, including students' achievement of program learning outcomes, that culminate in action plans tied to the outcomes and conclusions of the review. Annual reviews provide a focused review of one or more learning outcomes and an update on the implementation of action plans from prior annual and quinquennial reviews (3.8.07 MAAL Program Review; 3.8.08 MALET Program Review). For specialty area accredited programs, the program's accreditation self-study serves as the quinquennial review.

The School of Nursing and Allied Health works with the Office of Decision Support to administer collegewide surveys and reports both quantitative and qualitative data. Faculty use these data to assess the achievement of program outcomes and for performance improvement. These surveys include exit surveys which measure achievement of program outcomes and student satisfaction with the program and collegewide services, and alumni surveys which collect data related to employment and professional activities. In addition, course and faculty effectiveness data are collected in course and instructor evaluations at the end of each course. Data related to student graduation rates, retention rates, and course completion rates also are collected by the Office of Decision Support and aggregate results are provided to the program (3.8.09 Systematic Plan of Evaluation).

Summary of findings for Standard III

SUNY Empire State College has many strengths in the design and delivery of the student learning experience, as well as opportunities for improvement. The college provides diverse learning experiences through multiple modalities. Having full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty across all schools sets the college apart from nontraditional higher education peers. Faculty enhance the college's intellectual life, provide service through governance, and create new knowledge through scholarship. The faculty review process ensures a rigorous procedure for evaluating the quality of faculty in program delivery. The Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI) provides ongoing support for professional development of faculty. The college's mentoring model is unique in the SUNY system as well as in higher education. General education is a strength — the college has a long history of the general education program and assessment. Periodic reports and communications from Decision Support help drive improvement by providing relevant data to the college community.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has a robust course catalog and is the largest provider of online programming in the SUNY system.
- The college is committed to supporting faculty in the reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes, and will continue to work on ways to improve its support of faculty.
- The institution continues to strategically hire faculty that best support academic programming and locations.

Standard IV - Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Criterion 1: Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including:

a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds.

SUNY Empire State College provides prospective and current students with comprehensive information about costs of attendance and potential ways to pay for college, including tuition and fees (4.1.03 Undergrad Tuition and Fees; 4.1.04 Grad Tuition and Fees; 4.1.05 Military Veteran Tuition and Fees; 4.1.06 International Tuition and Fees; 4.1.07 iPLA Fees; 4.1.08 Fees at ESC), billing, financial aid (federal and state), eligibility waivers, scholarships, other sources of financial aid, and refunds. Current tuition and fee information can be found on the college's website and through other processes (e.g., information sessions, 4.1.01 Undergrad Info Sessions; 4.1.02 Grad Info Sessions).

The college website provides tuition rates, financial aid, refunds, and student account information. The SUNY Empire State College Foundation also provides information about an online application process for institutional scholarships:

- 4.1.09 Tuition Rates,
- 4.1.10 Financial Aid Homepage,
- 4.1.11 Financial Aid Refunds
- 4.1.12 Student Accounts,
- 2.7.08 ESCFAST Scholarship Opportunities

Section 5 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report affirms that the college's Student Consumer Information webpage contains links for students and the public to centrally access the information described above, and more (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information). The Institutional Federal Compliance Report also affirms that the Title IV student loan cohort default rate is 7.6%, and that the institution is compliant with Title IV Program Responsibilities.

To help facilitate student success and lower the cost of course materials, the college was involved in a NYS SUNY Open Educational Resources (OER) Funding Initiative (4.1.13 SUNY OER Funding). The grant money was in part used to initiate the Joyce S. McKnight OER Academy (4.1.14 McKnight OER Fellowship). As of January 2020, 13 faculty have become fellows of the academy and 21 courses have been converted to contain 51% OER materials. In addition, all 12 courses in the School for Graduate Studies M.A. in Learning and Emerging Technologies program, have been converted to OER. As a result, the college estimates that students have saved over \$100,000 on textbooks.

b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals.

The School for Undergraduate Studies' admission criteria (4.1.15 Associate and Bachelor Admissions) reflects the college's mission of access and aligns with the characteristics of an open admissions institution. The School for Graduate Studies and the School of Nursing and Allied Health have different admissions criteria (4.1.16 Grad Admissions; 4.1.17 SONAH Admissions) that also reflect the college's mission of access while responding to accreditation standards for admissions to such programs.

At the undergraduate level, all degree-seeking students are required to complete the standard admissions process as dictated in our Undergraduate Admissions Policy, including an application identifying their area of interest, as well as a brief essay that is evaluated for college writing level using a normed rubric. Potential outcomes of the process include admission, rejection with referral for more development, or referral for more extensive assessment. Those referred for additional assessment are evaluated and potential outcomes include full admission, rejection, or requirement to complete a noncredit writing course (4.1.18 Undergraduate Admissions Policy; 4.1.19 Application Essay; 4.1.20 Admissions Assessment Rubric).

Admission to the college is granted for those scoring between an 11 and 15 on the rubric; those scoring between 8-10 are referred to academic support for additional assessment (Secondary Assessment), and those scoring a 5-7 are not admitted. Up until 2014, for those applicants who scored an initial score of 7, a small committee reviewed the essay to see if they agreed with the score of 7 or not. If the score was revised, then the applicant was processed according to the new score. If the score remained a 7, then the applicant was not admitted to the college. Analysis from Decision Support in 2014 indicated that initial rubric scores positively correlated to students' likelihood to achieve academic success at the college (4.1.21 App Essay Results Summary). Building on this data, academic support professionals worked with faculty to design workshops that support students (3.4.05 Academic Support).

SUNY Empire State College's student population are working adults who may not have engaged in higher education for some time. Therefore, the Office of Academic Support created "just in time" tools and resources to all students, regardless of level. For example, on the MyESC Student Academic Support page (3.4.05 Academic Support), there is a "Tools for Success" column that identifies resources to help students succeed. Discipline-specific tutoring needs are addressed through writing and math learning coaches, Smarthinking online tutoring service (4.1.22 Smarthinking), or by peer tutors (4.1.23 Academic Support Events).

In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on identifying specific populations who may benefit from targeted programming. The Black Male Initiative Fortified Classroom (BMIFC) (4.1.24 BMIFC Flier) provides additional support to newly admitted students in order to help them successfully complete their all-important first year and, ultimately, earn their degrees. This program infuses/embeds additional academic support into the classroom, as well as Saturday coaching sessions. Program participants receive close oversight by an Initial mentor and BMIFC primary mentor associates. What makes this program unique is the infusion/embedding of various academic and other resources into the actual classroom instruction, so that students learn deeply in a supportive environment. Beyond providing technical assistance with assignment completion, note-taking, critical reading, critical thinking, study skills, and writing and math skills, mentors employ new pedagogical approaches to reach students in their first term, to engage them both personally and academically, and ensure that they learn and retain the needed skills and material to pass their courses (4.1.24 BMIFC Flier). An analysis supported the conclusion that participants in the BMIFC (n=19) were more likely to complete their courses than their peers and BMIFC participants, who were in their first term at the college, re-enrolled in the following term at higher rates compared to their peers (4.1.24 BMIFC Flier).

c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience.

Upon admission, students participate in an orientation that introduces them to the college's educational approaches, relevant policies and procedures, academic resources and supports, and strategies for success. Orientation is required prior to the student's first enrollment.

The School for Undergraduate Studies (SUS) offers three formats for orientation: In-person, online, and Skype (4.1.25 Getting Started). The School for Graduate Studies (SGS) and the School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) also have online orientations and this information is provided in the student acceptance letter. (4.1.26 Graduate Catalog pg. 61; 3.3.02 SONAH Catalog). Every student at Empire State College is assigned a mentor (SUS, SONAH) or advisor (SGS) to work with the student to meet curricular expectations based on their field of study.

A "Getting Started at the College" site guides undergraduate students through the steps that need completion prior to the start of their first studies (4.1.27 Begin). Comparable information is provided to graduate and nursing/allied health students upon acceptance to these programs. Data from the Student Opinion Survey administered in 2018 showed that prior to enrolling at SUNY Empire State College, 76.5% of students were very satisfied/satisfied with information received about college expectations and keys to academic success; 73.2% of students were very satisfied/satisfied with mentoring/advising information; and 70.7% of students were very satisfied/satisfied with degree planning information (4.1.28 Student Opinion Addtl Questions). Due to the individualized nature of degree planning, the college continues to strive to improve on providing good initial information to students and fostering ongoing interactions with mentors and staff throughout the process of degree planning.

A unique aspect of SUNY Empire State College is its mentoring model. Mentoring is a collaborative process that takes into account each student's educational background, goals, and interests when guiding them through the degree planning process, from orientation through graduation. Mentors also facilitate Educational Planning (4 to 8 credits) with their mentees, where students explore degree requirements, professional expectations, personal goals, and (if applicable) graduate school admission criteria, to develop individualized degree plans that fulfill academic requirements.

Given this "high touch" approach to academic advising, the college believes that the mentoring model is likely responsible for the college attaining the highest levels of student satisfaction in The State University of New York. In fact, in SUNY student surveys since in 2003, when Empire State College students were asked if they would select Empire State College again if they were just beginning their programs, their ratings on average were higher than those given by students from any other SUNY state-operated institution (4.1.29 Student Opinion Ranking 1994-2018).

All mentors have a common core of responsibilities, including design of learning experiences and resources, instruction, advisement, evaluation, and facilitation; however, the particular mix of responsibilities for an individual mentor varies considerably by location and school. This mix is part of the reason why faculty are so committed to the college and to the mentoring model.

Improving student retention and graduation rates have been key goals of recent strategic plans. Graduation rates are similar to those of open admission undergraduate institutions (4.1.30 Graduation and Retention Rates).

As mentors and advisors guide students throughout their educational experience, there are other resources to support students. The Student Information Center (SIC) provides initial assessment and resolution of student inquiries. The SIC is the central component of the 1 Stop Student Services (2.7.09 One Stop Student Services). On average, SIC fields 102,472 calls per year. In 2018, the service areas with the most frequent student requests for assistance were financial aid, registration, and student accounts.

Student inquiries related to academics and academic services are referred to the Student Success and Development team. In addition, this team is the first point of contact for coaching students and resolving informal issues, as well as triaging and resolving (if possible) grievances and appeals for students in the School for Undergraduate Studies. This team is utilizing CRM Advise to document individual cases.

The work of the Student Success and Development (SSD) team keeps the formal grievances and appeals to less than 1% of the undergraduate student body. When a student chooses to move their concern to a formal route, the Office of Student Academic Services handles all the formal grievances and academic appeals in the School for Undergraduate Studies in coordination with the deans of each academic school, and the Academic Appeals and Honesty Committee. The tables below highlight the work of this team from January to December 2018.

In summary, there were 102 formal service grievances and 16 formal academic appeals in the School for Undergraduate Studies. Of service grievance cases, 27% (n=28) were denied, 34% (n=35) were approved or partially approved by Academic Affairs, and 38% (n=39) were resolved. Of the appeals cases, 25% (n=4) were approved, 44% (n=7) were denied, and 31% (n=5) were resolved. Compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations concerning institutional records of student complaints is affirmed through college policy and procedure for management of student complaints, as well as publicly accessible student problem resolution resources as documented in section 4 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Tables

Service Grievances					
Issue	N	approved	partial	denied	resolved
Advising	16	9	3	1	3
Bias/ Unprofessional Conduct	7	1	0	4	2
Course Materials/ Technical Issues	6	2	0	2	2
Degree Planning	7	4	0	0	3
Instructor Contact	1	1	0	0	0
Insufficient Instruction and Feedback	18	2	2	6	8
Not Providing Extensions or Accommodations	26	3	1	11	11
Outcome does not follow college policy	4	1	0	0	3

Plagiarism	1	0	0	1	0
Registration/ Withdrawal Issues	8	4	0	1	3
Submitted work not evaluated/ grade not entered	8	2	0	2	4
Total	102	29	6	28	39
Percentage		28.43%	5.89%	27.24%	38.23%

Academic Appeals					
Issue	N	approved	partial	denied	resolved
Bias/ Unprofessional Conduct	2	1	0	1	0
Instructor Contact	0				
Insufficient Instruction and Feedback	4	1	0	2	1
Not Providing Extensions or Accommodations	2	2	0	0	0
Outcome does not follow college policy	0				
Plagiarism	5	0	0	3	2
Unfair Grading Practices	3	0	0	1	2
Total	16	4	0	7	5
Percentage		25%	0%	43.75%	31.25%

Finally, the director of student life and Title IX coordinator handles escalated student issues on behalf of the provost and president's office. Issues are tracked at each resolution level and the resulting data informs college process revisions, course design, and faculty/staff development (4.1.31 Student Problem Resolution).

Given the distributed nature of the college, counseling services demand a more inventive approach. In 2013, the college began to contract with Talk One-2-One, a service that provides students with counseling for personal, financial, and legal issues for up to five sessions free, and then connects them with external resources, if necessary. Faculty and staff also may use this service as a consulting option when dealing with difficult student situations. Usage data is collected from Talk One-2-One without identifying information.

While Talk One-2-One provides tele-counseling, the college also made a commitment to proactive interventions by employing a health and wellness coordinator beginning in 2012. With a more holistic approach, this office sponsors programs throughout the state, with a major focus being the annual Student Wellness Retreat held each spring. Topics such as nutrition, healthy lifestyles, financial wellness, leadership, dealing with conflict, mindfulness, and more are offered. Since its inception, conference attendance has grown significantly, suggesting that the proactive approaches are heavily desired (4.1.32 Health and Wellness).

The Office of Veteran and Military Education (OVME) provides support for all military-aligned students, including active duty, guard, reserve, veteran members, and their families. The website provides information about tuition fees and benefits. A dedicated staff provides prospective students with pre-enrollment advising and an evaluated education plan (EEP) with a review of anticipated transfer credits prior to enrollment. Once students are enrolled, OVME staff supports military-aligned students through Veterans Affairs and tuition assistance for active military and funding processes, and works to ensure student success through degree completion (4.1.33 Veteran and Military Education).

d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals, including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement.

SUNY Empire State College offers multiple programs to help students complete their degree and transition to career or graduate work. The degree-planning process is central to the undergraduate students' experience at the college. Each student must enroll in at least 4 credits, or up to 8, of educational planning, which is offered in a variety of modalities. Students are required to work with a faculty mentor to clarify their educational goals and plan a degree that meets those goals. Throughout this process, mentors encourage students to research industry and graduate school expectations as they create an undergraduate degree plan that helps them master content, as well as build and apply skills through courses or experiential learning. As part of the degree-planning process, mentors also help students identify and articulate prior learning that may accelerate the degree-completion progress. Finally, as part of the degree-planning process, students are required to articulate how their degree plan meets SUNY Empire State College degree requirements and addresses their professional and educational goals using area of study guidelines (3.5.03 Developing Your Degree Program; 4.1.34 Prior Learning Assessment webpage).

In addition to the degree planning courses, SUNY Empire State College created the Office of Career Services and hired a career development coordinator who manages the online career service infrastructure, identifies opportunities for career development, and helps students locate internships and submit corresponding paperwork (4.1.35 Career Services). The career development coordinator also offers individual phone and in-person appointments in Saratoga Springs and at SUNY Empire locations throughout the state. The coordinator meets with students and alumni through group and Skype workshops and provides asynchronous resume review, job search assistance, and various other career-related topics.

The School for Graduate Studies (SGS) also makes efforts to provide opportunities for undergraduates to explore graduate programs at the college. Undergraduate students may include 9 credits of graduate studies in their degree plans (4.1.36 UG in Grad Courses). These credits may apply toward a graduate certificate or graduate degree upon admission. Over the last few years, the creation of graduate certificates has increased access by providing stackable credentials that can be earned in a year or less, allowing working adults to continue their post-undergraduate careers with reduced risk. The college also has graduate advisors who help undergraduate students and other potential applicants identify programs that align with their educational and career goals.

Criterion 2: Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior nonacademic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.

Undergraduate students may apply up to 40 transfer credits toward a total minimum of 64 credits for an associate degree and up to 93 transfer credits toward a total minimum of 124 credits for the bachelor's degree (4.2.01 Undergrad Catalog pg. 20). Depending on the program, graduate students may apply up to 12 credits to master's programs and up to 3 credits to graduate advanced-certificate programs (4.2.02 Graduate Catalog pg. 133). Recent data shows that associate degree-seeking students applied an average of 27.8 advanced standing credits to their SUNY Empire State College degree programs, while those seeking bachelor's degrees applied an average of 67.5 advanced standing credits to their programs (4.2.03 Concurred Degrees by Adv Standing). In addition to the catalogs, policies and procedures for making decisions about the transfer of credits earned at other institutions are publicly disclosed on the college's website, and can be centrally accessed from the college's Student Consumer Information webpage, as noted in section 2 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Sources of transfer credit can include:

- Studies successfully completed at recognized post-secondary institutions, including regionally accredited U.S. institutions; post-secondary, degree-granting institutions recognized by the NYS Education Department; equivalent Canadian institutions; and/or non-U.S. institutions evaluated by one of four approved international academic credential evaluation services.
- Standardized college-level examinations such as CLEP, AP, DSST, and TECEP.
- Professional learning evaluations (PLE) of educational and/or training experiences conducted by agencies such as the American Council on Education, the National College Credit Recommendation Service, and Thomas Edison State University.
- Individualized prior learning assessment (PLA), a process through which students present their experientially gained learning to the college for evaluation.

Undergraduate students work with mentors during a credit-bearing educational planning study to establish their academic goals, develop degree programs, and determine how transfer credits and other forms of learning might apply to their degree programs. Official transcripts and other documentation are available to faculty and staff for analysis and advisement. Systems and processes for a centralized Early Transfer Review (ETR) process are in development and will provide consistent, detailed information regarding transferability and equivalency to students. Additionally, professional staff and functional offices serve as resources for faculty and students. The range of transfer of credit policies and articulation agreement information available to students and the public is presented in section 2 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

SUNY Empire State College awards credit through the individualized Prior Learning Assessment (iPLA) process that then can be incorporated into the student's degree program (2.8.07 iPLA Policy and Procedure). In addition to mentor support for the iPLA process, the college provides guidelines for students seeking credit through iPLA. Initiatives to improve iPLA resources include development of iPLA guides, development of informational videos and workshops, refinement of the online portal, conducting a survey of faculty to determine their needs for advising students, developing workshops accessible online, and developing a professional development schedule for iPLA practitioners (3.3.04 iPLA Guide).

In 2017, SUNY Empire State College established the Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning, which is developing partnerships with collegiate and noncollegiate organizations. These programs incorporate competency-based learning and workforce training into certificates and degree programs professional learning evaluations. The college follows the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) principles and is an active member of several national efforts in Professional Learning Evaluations (PLE) competency-based programs and competency approaches to PLA. The college has been recognized nationally for this work and has recently received a Lumina grant for continuing this work (4.2.04 Lumina Grant; 4.2.05 Professional Learning Evaluations).

Criterion 3: Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records;

SUNY Empire State College follows SUNY and college policies and procedures regarding the protection of student records (4.3.01 Records Retention). The college closely adheres to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which protects student information from being shared outside of the college without proper consent. As a public institution, the college is subject to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), which guarantees the public has access to public records. The college also underscores protection of staff, faculty, and students through the Service Standard Guidelines, which encapsulates both FERPA and FOIL, and through periodic trainings provided by the college. The Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines website (4.3.02 Policies Procedures Guidelines) is a comprehensive listing of all rules and regulations that the college adheres to as it pertains to student information and records. Furthermore, the policies detail how privacy is honored as it relates to internal relations and human resources. (4.3.03 FERPA; 4.3.04 Service Standard Guidelines). Institutional policies concerning the protection of privacy for students enrolled in distance-based courses or programs, including password verification, are included in section 1 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Criterion 4: If offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs;

The college centralized student services to form the Office of Student Success led by the interim vice provost for student success. This intentional refocusing allowed for deeper connections and focus of student services and aligning resources to the whole student experience. The Office of Student Success follows the same academic, budgetary, and other administrative principles that govern programs in the Office of Academic Affairs. Funding for these experiences come from stateside funding, as well as fee-based funding. A recent analysis within the office showed that for some programming, it was difficult to balance the supports between location-based students and online students. The college continues to examine ways to support all students regardless of modality. The list below outlines a sample of the offerings related to student life and extracurricular experiences:

- Clubs and Organizations – Currently there are 16 student clubs located around the state with either an academic or interest-themed focus.
- Get Out the Vote Campaign – Activities focus on voting and voter registration, with larger scale events during mid-term and presidential election years.
- Diversity Forums - Facilitated by faculty and the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These events are held at regional locations or presented via a virtual platform.
- Fall Student Conference – This three-day conference engages the college community and provides opportunities for students to present their research or on areas of interest.
- Regional Student and Alumni Events – Local events are open to students, alumni, and their families, and include theater and sporting events, mixers and networking events, and movie screenings.
- Health and Wellness Initiatives – The three-day Student Wellness Retreat draws more than 400 participants each year. The college also offers Student Health 101, a health and wellness e-magazine, and Student Wellness Assistance Program (4.1.32 Health and Wellness).
- Veteran and Military Events – Activities include participation in family outing events at NYS amusement parks, participation in local walks and races, and engagement in the annual Wreaths Across America.
- Student Art Competition – Students submit up to three pieces of artwork, which are reviewed by judges from across the state.
- Student Newsletter – The Student Connection is run by a student editor, under the guidance of the college’s coordinator of student life. (4.4.01 The Student Connection)
- Student Alumni Fund (SAF) Committee – Students are nominated and invited to participate. They oversee budget proposal requests from college offices and student clubs.
- Student Leadership Institute (SLI) – Established by the Student Affairs Committee with the Office of Student Life, the SLI enables students to explore, develop, and enhance their leadership abilities.
- Student Affairs Committee (SAC) – Elected student representatives engage in the shared governance process.

- Tau Kappa at-Large Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Honor Society of Nursing - Eligible SUNY Empire State College students and graduates are invited to join the chapter each year and be active participants in chapter activities throughout their professional lives (4.4.02 SONAH Catalog pg. 4).
- SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society - was founded in 2009 to recognize the college-level academic achievements of service members and veterans. SUNY Empire State College became a Chapter member in 2016 as a way to highlight the combination of academic excellence and service to country that so many of our military students demonstrate.

Criterion 5: if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers

The college contracts with third-party providers to deliver several student support services (e.g., Smarthinking). Third-party service providers go through a rigorous procurement process (4.5.01_SUNY_Purchasing_Procedure; 4.5.02_Procurement_BPM) depending upon certain budget thresholds. These services are included as part of students' fees and tuition. Experts within the community are involved in examining the possible outsourcing of services. These third-party providers are regularly evaluated to determine if the services are appropriate, or should be discontinued or changed to improve student success.

Criterion 6: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

SUNY Empire State College has participated in the triannual Student Opinion Survey since 1994 (4.6.01 Student Opinion Survey Years). The college has consistently ranked first in the SUNY system in response to the following questions, "How satisfied are you with this college in general?" and "If you could start over, would you choose this college again?" The 2018 SUNY Student Opinion Survey for State-Operated Institutions Comparison Report highlights numerous areas where the college ranks 1 among the 26 four-year institutions related to supporting the student experience, such as financial aid services, course registration processes, billing and payment processes, health and wellness programs, new student orientation, and related areas (4.6.02 Student Opinion Comp AppB). Even with these high ratings, SUNY Empire State College continues to evaluate and refine its approaches in order to best support its students.

The college analyzed the consistency of information shared with students across locations and determined that there have been variations based on location and modality. To address this finding, the college developed initiatives to improve communication to students. One initiative was the introduction of 1 Stop Student Services (2.7.09 One Stop Student Services). This initiative integrated the college website with the college's call center to provide information that is accurate, comprehensive, and regularly updated in response to the kinds and frequency of questions that the college receives. This includes financial aid and student account information, and the college use the frequency of student questions to update the website "Quick Answers" sections. Another initiative was the introduction of the student portal, (MyESC), in the spring of 2018, which provide landing page with financial aid and student accounts prominently displayed. This allowed continuing students the ability to access their billing information and financial aid in a seamless manner, along with all of their other account information (4.6.03 MyESC Financial Aid; 4.6.04 MyESC Student Accounts).

The college conducted two studies in 2016 and 2017 to assess undergraduate students' success as it relates to their use of academic support services. The first study focused on the college's largest region (Metropolitan), while the follow-up study was expanded statewide. Findings suggested that students who engage in academic support services are two times more likely to complete their courses, and those who utilize academic support in their first term are three times more likely to complete (4.6.09 Academic Support Webinar; 4.6.05 Course Completion by Support Use).

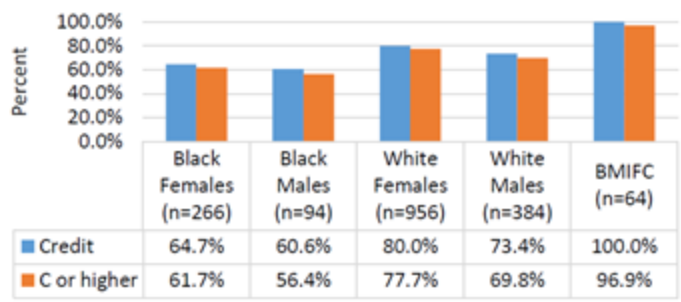
This assessment of the college's student support services points to the effectiveness of such supports and the value it provides to students. To further strengthen these supports, and to better understand the unique needs of each school, academic support professionals attend school and departmental meetings and engage in discussions with faculty. Next steps would be to increase the number of embedded and "just in time" supports specific to each school. Additionally, the college has initiated a pilot focusing on first-term students entering the college with less than 34 transcribed credits, with the goal of increasing their access to support services and to enhance student success.

Embedded supports also play a role in some of our reducing-the-gap initiatives related to demographic differences in student success and retention. The Black Male Initiative (BMI) at SUNY Empire State College is designed to support African-American males in their attainment of a college degree. The Black Male Initiative Fortified Classroom (BMIFC) is a pilot project that started at SUNY Empire in the fall 2017 term. The initial cohort for this project consisted of eight students in the college's New York City region. The BMIFC was designed to help newly admitted African-American male students persevere through to graduation by providing additional support to ensure successful completion of their first year. Examples of embedded support in the BMIFC consists of:

- Mentoring from faculty who are engaged in the BMI project and student/alumni peer coaches
- Academic and writing support
- Access to weekend coach sessions
- Career counseling
- Meetings to cover key topics for first-year students (e.g., time management skills, the degree planning process, prior learning assessment process, etc.)
- Seminars on financial aid

Decision Support designed studies to test the efficacy of the program by comparing the course completion rates of BMIFC participants to their nonaffiliated peers. Black Male Initiative Fortified Classroom participants were significantly more likely than other students to complete their first-year courses and earn a grade of a C or higher. The college is exploring ways to expand this success across the college. These results are depicted in the table below (4.6.06 BMI Flier).

Table 1: First-year Credit Completion Rates and Grades by Race and Gender/Affiliation, 2017FA1 Cohort (16 credits)



Notes: Credit was defined as any registration with a course grade of an A through a D-. The data sources for this analysis were:
 1. Colleague,
 2. CPIE Analytics and
 3. The Decision Support Integrated Repository.
 Pearson Chi-Square Test of Independence results:
 $X^2(4, N=1,764) = 60.91, p < 0.001, V=0.19$ (Credit);
 $X^2(4, N=1,764) = 62.03, p < 0.001, V=0.19$ (C or higher).

After the college reorganization in 2016, Student Academic Services assumed responsibility for processing reinstatement petitions for undergraduate students who had been dismissed due to lack of academic progress. The office collected and analyzed reinstatement data. The results showed a weak correlation between the success of reinstated students and the college's then-current satisfactory academic progress policy (i.e., credits completed vs. number of terms enrolled). The results were presented at the 2018 Fall Academic Conference (4.6.07 Supporting Returning Students) and a change to the college's satisfactory academic policy was recommended. In January 2019, the Undergraduate Committee on Academic Policy accepted this recommendation and the new Academic Probation Policy (4.6.08 Academic Probation Policy) was implemented in fall 2019. This new policy decouples academic standing from course completion percentages in favor of the GPA standard used at most SUNY and adult-focused peer institutions. It also frees the college from a standard that was difficult for faculty and students to understand, required extensive manual tracking to administer, and resulted in unintended dismissal of students late in their academic program.

Summary of Findings for Standard IV

SUNY Empire State College recruits and admits diverse students whose interests and goals are congruent with its mission. The college promotes student success through effective academic supports maintained by engaged and committed professionals. These professionals enhance the learning experience and foster student retention, persistence, and completion.

Strengths and Suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has a strong commitment to increased access and reduced costs of textbooks through engagement in the NYS SUNY Open Educational Resources (OER) Funding Initiative and the Joyce S. McKnight OER Academy. The college should continue to find new avenues to increase access and reduce costs to students.
- The college's innovative approach to student services has been successful in promoting student persistence across a distributed environment. Continued work in this area would further strengthen these efforts.
- The college has had success with its Black Male Initiative Fortified Classroom (BMIFC) and this year increased funding to further expand this initiative. In addition, the institution is well-positioned to extend this work to other student populations.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education. An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

Criterion 1: Clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.

SUNY Empire State College has clearly stated institutional goals (2.2.01 Learning Goals Policy). Within each school, faculty work together to develop curriculum and academic programs that support students in the attainment of these institutional goals. Shared governance ensures that all proposals for new and revised academic programs, certificates, and guidelines align with the institution's educational goals and mission.

Educational goals at the degree program level for undergraduate programs are articulated through the area of study (AOS) guidelines and SUNY General Education Requirements, and map to the seven college learning goals (5.1.01 Achievement of College Learning Goals). The guidelines, requirements, and goals are publicly accessible for review by any stakeholder (prospective student, current student, faculty, and staff) (5.1.02 Undergrad Catalog pg. 21-34). As faculty reflect upon continuous improvement and develop new and/or enhance existing academic initiatives, they are attentive to the needs of adult students as self-directed, lifelong learners and committed to the alignment of course and program offerings with the college learning goals and mission of the institution (3.5.01 General Education Requirements; 3.1.01 Undergraduate Degrees).

The School for Graduate Studies (SGS) aims to build on the intellectual interests of students while helping them to advance personally and professionally, gain expertise in a field, and effect change in their communities (5.1.03 SGS Mission and Vision). The school expects students to achieve the outcomes outlined in the College Learning Goals Policy (2.2.01 Learning Goals Policy). Each program is designed to connect theory and practice. The SGS Catalog 2019-2020 is publicly accessible and includes comprehensive information on program design and goals, enrollment sequence, and program delivery for each degree and advanced certificate program (3.3.03 Graduate Catalog). Graduate programs meet additional standards for accreditation as determined by the corresponding organizations. The Master of Arts in Teaching program is accredited through the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and through the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). The Master of Business Administration in Business Management is accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) and recognized by the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM). In addition, SUNY Empire State College is also recognized as a registered education provider (REP) by the Project Management Institute and meets the standards for quality in course content, instructor qualifications, and instructional design.

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) has goals that are congruent with the college's mission to prepare students to be leaders in multifaceted healthcare environments within a diverse global community (4.4.02 SONAH Catalog pg. 4). In particular, the school aims to provide seamless academic progression, promote collaboration supported by mentoring and offer engaging learning opportunities, develop lifelong learning skills, while providing affordable and flexible programs for adult students. New program/certificate development and course revisions are completed through a collaborative process, with faculty as subject matter experts and professionals providing curriculum and instructional design support. Curricular changes are reviewed by the SONAH curriculum committee and approved by the faculty. Course objectives, module objectives, and learning activities are mapped to degree program outcomes. Nursing degree programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and meet the standards for accreditation as determined by the Commission (3.6.05 AACN CCNE Accreditation).

The Institutional Federal Compliance report affirms that the college is compliant with accreditation-relevant federal regulations via public disclosure of current standing with the state, as well as the accrediting agencies outlined above and identified elsewhere in this document. Disclosures and letters of good standing for the School of Nursing, MAT, and MBA programs are accessible on the college's Student Consumer Information page (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information).

Criterion 2: Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should:

a. Define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals;

SUNY Empire State College has a long history of assessing student learning in alignment with the college's mission. Within the School for Undergraduate Studies, there are two meaningful curricular goals, programmatic and general education. The programmatic goals are based upon the area of study guidelines, which are registered with the New York State Education Department (3.8.01 Area of Study webpage). These guidelines broadly represent a body of knowledge expected within that field and must be utilized to design a degree program during Educational Planning (5.2.01 Educational Planning Policy). The general education goals are aligned with SUNY's General Education Requirements (3.5.01 General Education Requirements).

The college's organized and systemic assessment processes ensure that curricular goals are achieved. General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) evaluates SUNY Empire State College's general education program alignment with each of the SUNY General Education Requirements. Assessment in the major (AITM) (2.8.04 AITM Reports) evaluates how the college's curriculum enables students to achieve programmatic goals as outlined in the AOS guidelines. Because of the college's individualized educational approach, faculty review student work examples as part of the GEAR and the AITM.

An additional assessment process includes the area of study review (AOSR) (2.8.05 AOSR Reports). The AOSR is a program-level assessment of degree portfolios of recent graduates to examine degree program design as it relates to academic policies, e.g., bachelor's and associate degree program design, degree program rationales, advanced-standing credits, prior learning assessment, and learning contracts (5.2.02 Bachelors Degrees Policy; 5.2.03 Associate Degrees Policy; 3.8.03 Degree Program Rationale Policy; 5.2.04 Advanced Standing Policy; 3.8.04 Prior Learning Policy; 3.8.05 Learning Contracts Policy). The School for Graduate Studies (SGS) assesses the quality and effectiveness of graduate degree programs through two types of program review: full program review and annual program review. Graduate program review is a developmental process with the purpose of promoting a culture of continuous improvement. During full program review, graduate faculty review guidelines, curriculum, standards, and delivery modes; assess the extent to which student learning outcomes have been achieved at the course and program levels; and review expectations of accrediting bodies. During annual program review, graduate faculty sample a minimum of one student learning outcome and evaluate the extent to which students have achieved it in their coursework. A detailed description of both types of program review is provided in the policy on Framework for Graduate Program Review (3.1.11 Graduate Program Review).

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) maintains a systematic plan of evaluation (5.2.08 Systematic Plan of Evaluation). The curricular goals for SONAH are congruent with the college's mission, which focuses on creating learning environments that promote critical thinking, social responsibility, and lifelong learning. SONAH prepares nurses and other healthcare professionals to become leaders and full partners on interdisciplinary teams in complex health care environments within a global community. In SONAH, input regarding modification to the curriculum is gathered each term from full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as from the SONAH advisory committee over the course of regularly scheduled meetings.

b. Articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals;

SUNY Empire State College is an institution devoted to building on the diversity of its students and their work and life experiences, to provide access to quality academic programs that empower people. Our students benefit from the opportunity to work with and learn from its faculty, who are specialists in their fields. In the design and teaching of courses, faculty utilize applied learning techniques, (e.g., case studies, field work, observations). Such learning has real-world application for students and prepares them for successful careers.

School of Undergraduate Studies (SUS) alumni reported that earning a degree from Empire State College prepared them for employment (59.13%), increased their earning potential (61.91%), influenced them to work in a more rewarding position (40.78%), and enabled them to enroll in a graduate or professional program (30.7%) (5.2.12 UG Alumni Survey 2016-17). Data obtained from the 2017 employer survey (5.2.13 MAT Employer Survey) given to alumni of the Master of Arts in Teaching program indicate that graduates demonstrate knowledge of the content and structure of the discipline of teaching (89.7%), content-related pedagogy (89.7%), characteristics of a reflective practitioner (89.7%), and professionalism in decision-making, ethical conduct, and integrity (87.1%).

Students reported that SUNY Empire State College has made moderate to large contributions, on average, to their growth and learning (5.2.05 Student Opinion Summary pg.18). The items making the largest contribution, according to rank order, are writing clearly and effectively; acquiring knowledge and skills for further academic study; acquiring information, ideas, and concepts; acquiring analytical thinking skills; acquiring knowledge and skills for intellectual growth throughout life; and acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career (5.2.05 Student Opinion Summary pg. 18).

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) and International Education (IE) demonstrate how the college prepares students to have successful careers and meaningful lives. The faculty in the SONAH prepare graduates to function in a variety of complex health care environments with individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan. Graduates gain advanced knowledge of nursing and related sciences, so that they can provide evidence-based care, both directly and indirectly, and affect health outcomes. Data regarding student achievement is collected through course-level assessments designed to measure achievement of student learning outcomes through written assignments such as scholarly papers, case studies, and reflective journals; and achievement of program-level outcomes as evidenced through successful completion of the capstone course. In addition, employment rates (as reported via exit interviews) are 98% for BSN graduates, and 100% for MSN graduates, which exceeds the internally set benchmark of 90% (5.2.06 Systematic Plan of Evaluation pg. 27).

Lastly, International Education (IE) supports the college in its mission by providing opportunities for faculty and students to engage in cross-cultural exchanges through innovative course delivery methods (i.e., virtual residencies and SUNY Collaborative Online International Learning). Through partnerships with other educational institutions (e.g., Athens, Prague), IE offers students an opportunity to earn a U.S. degree that promotes the college learning goals of breadth and depth of knowledge, critical thinking and active learning, and social responsibility. IE alumni go on to prestigious graduate and professional programs both in the U.S. and abroad including the London School of Economics, INSEAD, Cornell, and the Harvard Business School. They have notable careers in international banking, finance, marketing, technology, manufacturing, engineering, hospitality, and higher education (5.2.07 SUNY COIL).

c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders;

SUNY Empire State College supports and sustains the assessment of student learning through the Office of Decision Support. The Faculty Associate for Outcomes Assessment (FAOA) in this office works with faculty to coordinate and report on student assessment. The FAOA collects undergraduate student work samples that are used for assessment in the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) and the Assessment in the Major (AITM). In addition, the FAOA identifies portfolios for the Area of Study Review assessment process. For all three assessments, key findings, themes, and areas for improvement are sent to academic leadership for further action (2.8.03 GEAR Reports; 2.8.04 AITM Reports; 2.8.05 AOSR Reports). All reports are made available online to the college community through the Decision Support webpage (2.8.01 Decision Support).

Parallel to the process used for undergraduate programs, program review in the School for Graduate Studies (SGS) is coordinated by the division chair. Samples of student work and graduation files are used for full and annual program reviews. The division chair and faculty share responsibility for norming, evaluation, and reporting activities. Faculty in SGS identify areas in need of improvement and/or potential growth and development and create an action plan. Results, recommendations, and the action plan are compiled into a report and shared with the Graduate Policy and Planning Committee, SGS Dean, Provost, President, and other college-wide constituencies as appropriate.

In the School for Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH), in addition to data collected through course and program-level assessments in SONAH, the Office of Decision Support administers exit, alumni, and employer surveys. Results of these surveys are reviewed on an annual basis at the SONAH governance meeting and reflected in the Systematic Plan of Evaluation (5.2.08 Systematic Plan of Evaluation; 5.2.09 Learning Outcomes Assessment).

The college follows an assessment cycle established by SUNY assessment policies (5.2.10 SUNY Assessment Policies). The assessment in the major (AITM) and area of study review (AOSR) are staggered so that student learning outcomes and student degree portfolios are assessed for each AOS every six years, while GEAR assessment occurs every three years (3.8.06 Assessment Cycle 2019-2027).

Since 2013, there have been multiple FAOA whose job it is to facilitate GEAR, AITM AOSR, and write the “Comprehensive Review of Methodologies and Results.” Due to recent changes in staffing, there have been delays in the college’s assessments. The last assessments were completed in 2017-2018 (i.e., Mathematics GEAR, Arts GEAR, Historical Studies AITM, Historical Studies AOSR, Science, Math and Technology AITM, Science, Math and Technology AOSR). The delayed assessments were Basic Communication GEAR, Critical Thinking GEAR, Community and Human Services (CHS) AITM, CHS AOSR, Social Science AITM, and Social Science AOSR. This one-year delay was incorporated into a new calendar (3.8.06 Assessment Cycle 2019-2027). The CHS AITM occurred in October 2019, and the Basic Communication GEAR was assessed in January 2020. The CHS AOSR and Critical Thinking GEAR are scheduled for February and May 2020, respectively. The “Comprehensive Review of Methodologies and Results” is being written in 2019-2020.

Full program review in the School for Graduate Studies (SGS) occurs every five years or as determined by the organization for programs that are accredited (5.2.11 SGS Program Review Schedule). The School of Nursing and Allied Health occurs at least every five years or as determined by the specialized accrediting agency.

These processes provide evidence of the college’s focus on continuous improvement and communication to stakeholders. Assessment of student learning is valued and well-supported by various offices and personnel across the college, and is an ongoing, reflective process involving faculty, academic professionals and staff, administration, and governance.

Concomitant with Student Right to Know, the college posts information concerning enrollment, retention, graduation, and employment rates on the student consumer information web page. Student outcomes data required for public disclosures are systematically reviewed and verified annually by the college’s Office of Decision Support, which is affirmed in Section 5 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. Direct assessment of student learning outcomes is also addressed in Section 8 of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

Criterion 3: Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution’s mission, such uses include some combination of the following:

SUNY Empire State College’s commitment to educational effectiveness is manifested through several uses of assessment for its improvement.

a. Assisting students in improving their learning;

One assessment tool that examines direct samples of student learning is the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR). In particular, three GEARs (i.e., Critical Thinking, Information Management, Basic Communication) evaluate students' writing and communication skills. These assessments highlighted a number of concerns that included plagiarism, over-simplification of arguments, and coherent use of evidence (5.3.01 GEAR Critical Thinking; 5.3.02 GEAR Basic Communication; 5.3.03 GEAR Information Management).

Given these results, and to assist students in improving their learning, the college's academic support offices (3.4.05 Academic Support) provide an array of services that include:

- Academic skills development courses that focus on college-level learning skills and strategies.
- Noncredit courses, workshops, and embedded tools focused on reading, writing, quantitative skills, technical competencies, time management, and self-care.
- JumpStart is a multi-hour program offered early in the term with drop-in hours and workshops. It is designed to overcome barriers typically found in the first few weeks of the term and provides students with access to continued support if needed or desired. Students at all levels are welcome to participate.
- SUNY Empire State College has writing coaches, learning coaches, and peer tutors who work directly with students. The college offers evening and daytime hours to meet the needs of our students. Students also can access Smarthinking Online Tutoring for most subjects.

a. Improving pedagogy and curriculum;

The culture of assessment at SUNY Empire State College is apparent in its approach to continuous improvement and emphasis on strengthening its educational effectiveness. This can be observed at multiple levels through the following examples: development of a college-level course catalog, engagement in curriculum mapping and review within schools, and evaluation of learning contracts within departments.

The process of creating a course catalog in the School for Undergraduate Studies involved an internal review of our academic curriculum and pedagogy. Faculty within departments and schools reviewed each course to be included in the catalog and evaluated the course title, description, learning outcomes, level, and liberal/non-liberal designation. Once all courses were vetted by faculty, conversations ensued to determine prerequisites, course sequencing and numbering, and if courses met the criteria for general education requirements. Through this process, department and school faculty consolidated former course offerings that were previously offered in separate, regionally based catalogs.

Subsequently, departments and schools proceeded with mapping courses approved for the catalog to the corresponding area of study guidelines and college learning goals. Through this mapping process, gaps in curriculum were identified, as well as areas of overlap within courses and learning outcomes, both within departments and across schools. This led to development of new courses that better align with student needs. The formation of school-based curriculum and academic review committees support these activities.

Finally, undergraduate department chairs were charged with reviewing the elements of student learning contracts (3.8.05 Learning Contract Policy). For example, in the School of Human Services, department chairs reviewed learning contracts for alignment between policy and practice. Based on this review, department chairs identified areas for improvement of learning contracts and developed professional development sessions for faculty and adjuncts around learning contract design (5.3.04 CHS Learning Contract Review). In addition, a learning contract rubric was developed and shared across schools to assist with learning contract review (5.3.05 Learning Contract Review Rubric).

b. Reviewing and revising academic programs and support services;

Each school engages in a process to review and revise their academic programs. In the School for Undergraduate Studies, the FAOA collects information that summarizes assessment activities that took place within the last year, actions to improve teaching and learning, and goals for the upcoming academic year. This provides ongoing engagement with “closing the loop” activities. For example, the School of Human Services developed a five-year plan to systematically identify and respond to certain facets of their 2014 Area of Study report (5.3.06a AOSR CHS 2014; 5.3.07 CHS 5yr Plan). The 2020 CHS Assessment in the Major Report gives further evidence how a school reviews and revises academic programming (5.3.06b AOSR CHS 2020).

The School for Graduate Studies (SGS) has a one- and a five-year review for all academic programs that are not accredited by professional accreditation agencies. The one-year and five-year program review (5.2.11 SGS Program Review Schedule) of all other graduate programs follows the process as described in ESC Policy 310.047, Framework for Graduate Program (3.1.11 Graduate Program Review). Data from the one-year and five-year review are evaluated by program faculty as to the learning outcomes and how well students meet those learning outcomes in the capstone projects. If there are gaps, faculty recommend changes in the curriculum as a process of continual improvement. The following year, the process is repeated to see if changes have had an impact on program quality (3.1.11 Graduate Program Review).

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SONAH) maintains a systematic plan of evaluation. The curricular goals for SONAH are congruent with the college’s mission, which focuses on creating learning environments that promote critical thinking, social responsibility, and lifelong learning. In SONAH, input regarding modification to the curriculum is gathered each term from full-time and adjunct faculty, as well as from the SONAH advisory committee over the course of regularly scheduled meetings.

Overall, the faculty across the college participate in regular and ongoing work to address improvements in course and program offerings.

c. Planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities;

The Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI) is dedicated to the professional development of faculty. CMLAI offers workshops and events across the college and provides forums for sharing questions, ideas, projects, and approaches related to the practice and scholarship of mentoring, teaching, and learning. CMLAI also offers an in-person new mentor orientation, and monthly check-in calls ensure ongoing engagement and support of new faculty mentors. Finally, CMLAI offers workshops based upon requests from the college community and in response to pressing issues at the college.

The college's instructional design (5.3.08 Instructional Design) and educational technology (5.3.09 Educational Technologies) groups also provide the college community with professional development opportunities related to teaching and learning. Faculty have opportunities to learn about course alignment, writing effective learning objectives, designing a blended course, visual course design, retention enhancing course design strategies, and setting clear expectations and requirements.

Lastly, the college has two annual conferences (the "Fall Academic Conference" and the "All College Conference") that bring faculty together to participate in a range of professional development activities, gather with colleagues to reflect on new and current practices, discuss curriculum, and generate ideas on how the college can improve student services. In addition, time is set aside for school and department planning. For example, as highlighted in Standard V, Criterion 3b, the School of Human Services planned their "closing the loop" activities and disseminated their findings during these conferences.

d. Planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;

Assessment data informs planning and budgeting decisions when considering academic programming. One example is international education. The executive director of international education (IE) and IE program directors work with the college's institutional partners to determine which new concentrations to offer students in any one program; this is formally detailed in Memoranda of Agreement.

Concentrations and courses vary according to student needs, as well as local requirements for the degree, as dictated by the presiding ministry of education. Consideration of partner expertise and capacity, complemented by the college's own areas of strength, also play a role in determining offerings. IE program directors lead the process with the partners, then programs are submitted to the IE curriculum committee for review. New programs and partnerships are developed and implemented through a collaborative process between the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Administration based upon market research and cost-analysis data.

Another example is the School for Graduate Studies (SGS). The school developed a strategic plan, which includes three objectives: to increase relevant academic programs, improve institutional effectiveness, and enhance innovation in the curriculum. Initiatives were identified that supported these objectives, which informed budget development and resourcing. These included hiring a new faculty member to support an M.S. in information technology; identifying professional-development funds for faculty and staff; and creating a committee to provide increased opportunities for training and faculty development. Alternatively, to further shape the academic program, low-enrolled programs, such as the French content area in the MAT program and the advanced certificate in women and corporate leadership, are being delisted to free up resources.

e. Informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;

The college has several ways to communicate information to appropriate constituents. Pursuant to Student Right to Know obligations, the Office of Decision Support annually affirms that institutional disclosures concerning graduation, completion, and other data are posted on the college's consumer information website (2.1.08 Student Consumer Information). Required disclosures are reviewed annually and updated as necessary. The Office of Decision Support also provides learning outcomes assessment information online to all college employees. The details for these assessments were provided in the discussion of Criterion 2c of this report (5.2.09 Learning Outcomes Assessment). The Office of Decision Support also develops, analyzes, and maintains trend data (student applications, headcount, credits attempted, degrees awarded, and retention and graduation rates), college fact books, and a variety of survey results.

f. Improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates;

The Office of Decision Support collaborates with stakeholders from across the college to conduct studies that inform operational and academic decision making (5.3.10 Decision Support Information Briefs). In addition, trend data, such as applications by location and school, degrees and certificates awarded by school and program, and retention and graduation data, provide a multi-year snapshot of key indicators (5.3.11 Trend Data; 5.3.12 Retention and Graduation 2017-18). Along with outcomes assessment data (2.8.03 GEAR Reports; 2.8.04 AITM Reports; 2.8.05 AOSR Reports), this information supports school and departmental “closing the loop” activities as faculty consider ways to improve the student learning experience and measure programmatic rigor.

As SUNY Empire State College continues to implement its new enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems, the college is more readily placed to set and measure key performance indicators (KPIs) for student success. With key information on student success, graduation, etc. having already been analyzed by Decision Support, the college can build on that data and use its business-process mapping models to analyze, modify, and enhance our processes and practices to improve student success and retention.

g. Implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services

SUNY Empire State College is a learning organization that strives for excellence through continuous improvement. The college has experienced significant change over the past five years (e.g. ESC 2.0, strategic planning, leadership changes), which has provided opportunities to examine all aspects of the college. One example relates to the extensive use of business-process mapping models to reduce bottlenecks and improve efficiencies. To date, more than 100 business-process models have been created to improve services to internal and external stakeholders. Sample areas for which process maps have been created include those for the Office of Academic Affairs (e.g. assigning mentors, degree planning processes, graduation clearance processes), the Office of Administration (e.g. student accounts business processing, cross-registration), and the Office of Enrollment Management (e.g. admissions, out-of-state online student support). A prime example is the complete SUNY Empire student lifecycle and all of its associated subprocesses (5.3.13 Student Lifecycle). As these business process maps are implemented, evaluated, and refined, this will lead to improved educational programs and services at SUNY Empire State College.

Criterion 4: if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers

This criterion is not applicable.

Criterion 5: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness.

Periodic evaluation of the college's assessment processes is done in conjunction with its institutional assessments, and as part of a Comprehensive Review of Methodologies and Results (CRMR) (5.5.01 Comp Review of Methodologies). The last CRMR, completed in October 2013, reviewed all assessment processes from 2006-2012, two GEAR assessments for each subject, and one AITM/AOSR for each area of study. The current CRMR was delayed due to significant changes in the college's leadership and structures. Despite these delays, the college has utilized the findings in the 2013 CRMR to improve the assessment process.

For example, the CRMR report identified a challenge of collecting student work samples that are representative of all the college's undergraduate centers for the AITM and GEAR. During the review period, samples were drawn predominantly, often exclusively, from the former Center for Distance Learning. This sampling limitation affected the generalizability of the findings and reduced collegewide faculty engagement in outcomes assessment. Based on these findings, a new sampling procedure was implemented to ensure that student work samples are being drawn from a pool that represents all study modalities and across academic centers, as evidenced by subsequent AITM and GEAR reports (2.8.03 GEAR Reports; 2.8.04 AITM Reports).

The college has also engaged in activities that contributed to improving assessment process effectiveness. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the outcomes assessment team created a three-year plan to assess the college's academic assessment plan (5.5.02 Academic Assessment Plan 2014). Areas of assessment included: college policy on assessment, learning outcomes, learning contracts, closing the loop, promoting a culture of assessment, collective circular responsibility, and front-end assessment. The team's 2015-2016 annual report of activities outlines progress made for each of the focal areas (5.5.03 Outcomes Assessment Exec Summ 2015; 5.5.04 Outcomes Assessment Team Report 2016).

In May 2018, the Office of Academic Affairs sponsored a two-day assessment summit during which undergraduate department chairs and academic administrators developed an approach and plan for the assessment of student learning within the new organizational structure (5.5.05 UG Assessment Summit). Discussions included identifying gaps in outcomes assessment, strategies for improving documentation of outcomes assessment activities, and creating consistent processes for assessment across schools. Student work and degree-program sampling methods for future periodic assessments were also discussed. Following this summit, department chairs engaged faculty in curriculum mapping, while providing them with professional development related to student learning outcomes.

Subsequently, in May 2019, a two-day leadership retreat was held for undergraduate department chairs, deans, and other academic leadership in Academic Affairs. A session on "Improving Assessment Practice" was provided by the director of outcomes assessment and the dean from the School of Human Services. Engaging in targeted, cross-school conversations elevated the importance of documenting the effectiveness of the college's assessment processes and led to subsequent discussions by faculty within their school and department meetings. In addition, the leadership retreat focused on professional development based on previous feedback from the department chairs (5.5.06 OAA Leadership Retreat 2019).

Summary of findings for Standard V

SUNY Empire State College actively engages in the ongoing assessment of student learning. The results of these assessments demonstrate that students successfully meet educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education. The college's structural changes in recent years, particularly at the undergraduate level, from regional academic centers to discipline-based departments and schools, will provide opportunities to further strengthen academic quality and enhance the student experience. The impact of these changes will be captured as the college engages in ongoing cycles of outcomes assessment and will inform future efforts toward continual improvement.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has clear learning goals at the program and institution levels that align with the college's commitment to delivering innovative, flexible, and quality academic programs.
- The college is well regarded by students and employers, as indicated by student opinion and employer surveys.
- The college has a long history of outcomes assessment, with faculty engagement at every level, i.e. identification of samples, development of rubrics, evaluation of samples, discussion of results, and implementation of findings.
- Given the restructuring associated with ESC 2.0, the college will continue to assess the impact of these changes on academic quality, student learning and achievement, and student support services.

Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Criterion 1: Institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation;

The college recently engaged in a strategic planning process that resulted in the development of a strategic plan *Going for the Gold: Empire State College at 50, 2021 & Beyond* (1.1.01 *Going for the Gold*). The strategic planning process included refining the college's statement of its mission and goals, as was discussed in Standard I of this self-study report.

The college utilized the balanced scorecard method for strategic planning, which began in the summer of 2016. In preparation for the strategic planning process, members of the college community wrote a series of assessment briefs. These included two strategic reports, three educational/legal reports, one political forecast, two financial reports, and a report on the college's workplace climate (6.1.01 *Balanced Scorecard Assessment Briefs*). These reports were made available to the college community through the college's strategic planning SharePoint site.

The strategic management team utilized these reports to develop strategic themes, which were refined in collaboration with stakeholders from across the college. The plan's final themes were: 1) student success, 2) academic innovation, 3) expanding impact and recognition, and 4) operational excellence and sustainability. Four teams were created, consisting of a diverse group of college community members who were responsible for creating the college's 15 strategic objectives. Once these objectives were finalized, the objective owner teams developed performance measures and initiatives for each strategic objective (6.1.02 *Strategic Obj Commentary Worksheet*).

There was robust involvement in the creation of the strategic plan across the college community. Individual offices and divisions have created, or are in the process of creating, their own planning and assessment documents and frameworks (6.1.03 *Academic Master Plan 2019*; 6.1.04 *Strategic Financial Plan 2021*; 6.1.05 *Strategic Technology Roadmap 2018-2021*).

The college's new organizational structure was designed to provide greater consistency in the undergraduate academic programs offered across the college and encourage academic innovation within and across the schools. The individual academic schools and college offices worked on developing priorities for improvement. For example, the School of Business has focused on assessment activities related to area of study and concentration guidelines. Similarly, the School of Human Services devoted efforts toward "closing the loop" activities that emerged from their analysis of a variety of data from learning contracts, area of study reviews, and assessment in the major results (5.3.04 *CHS Learning Contract Review*; 2.8.05 *AOSR Reports*; 2.8.04 *AITM Reports*).

Within the Office of Administration, several plans are underway for assessing, prioritizing, implementing, and monitoring various aspects of the college's financial resources (6.1.04 Strategic Financial Plan 2021; 6.1.06 Quarterly Resource Management Mtgs), technological (6.1.05 Strategic Technology Roadmap 2018-2021; 6.1.07 ERP-CRM Steering Comm Apr 2019), and physical (6.1.08 Lease Management Tool; 6.1.09 SPAC meetings). These plans align with MSCHE's Requirements of Affiliation #11: "The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis." Each of these functional plans identify Tier II objectives and goals that support the 15 objectives of the Going for the Gold strategic plan.

In addition, the Office of Academic Affairs has developed an academic master plan with broad participation from faculty across schools and locations in the college (6.1.03 Academic Master Plan 2019). Initial planning discussions identified six areas or working groups: academic programs, enrollment and retention, experiential learning, facilities and operations, student experience, and teaching and mentoring. Similar to the functional plans from the Office of Administration, the academic master plan reinforces the 15 objectives of the Going for the Gold strategic plan. Criterion 3 includes a map for all functional Tier II plans.

Criterion 2: Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results;

The college has documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results. Periodic town halls were conducted as the strategic plan was being developed (e.g., 6.2.01 Strategic Plan Webinar). In these collegewide meetings, information about the plan was communicated to faculty and staff across the state. Each town hall afforded stakeholders an opportunity to ask questions and express their opinions about the plan's content and design. In addition, the strategic management team presented a poster summarizing efforts to date at the college's 2017 All College Conference (6.2.02 Strategic Plan Poster).

Once the collegewide Tier I plan was completed, divisions and schools began work on their Tier II strategic plans. The divisions of enrollment management, academic affairs, advancement, decision support, administration, and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion all developed Tier II plans (e.g., 6.2.04 Tier 2 Strategic Plan Map). The goal of developing Tier II plans was to align division and individual goals with the college's overall strategic direction. The Tier II planning process provided college employees with a clear understanding of how they can contribute to the achievement of the college's overall goals (6.2.03 Tier 1 Objective Measures Comp).

In the first phase of the Tier II process, college employees who were involved with developing the Tier I plan provided training to division members on the balanced scorecard methodology. Once an understanding of this framework was gained, information regarding how and why the college's strategic objectives were created was shared. This provided members of each division with a conceptual understanding of the college's strategic direction.

In the next phase, division members convened to discuss their unit’s purpose and how it aligns with the college’s overall strategy. From there, they developed divisional strategic objectives that aligned with Tier I objectives. This included the creation of new objectives, adopting existing Tier I objectives for their division, or deciding that a Tier I objective did not apply to their division. Once the divisions’ strategic objectives were in place, team members developed intended results, performance measures and targets, and initiatives for each objective. Finally, each objective was assigned to a member of the team who is responsible for tracking progress and results.

Below is an example of a Tier II plan. This is not Decision Support’s plan in its entirety, but it does provide an example for each component of the plan for three of its nine strategic objectives.

Table: Example of Tier II Plan for Decision Support

Strategic Objective	Tier I Alignment	Intended Results	Measures	Targets	Initiatives
Increase experimental design	Increase innovation across the college; Improve retention and graduation rates across all populations.	Pilot projects and experimental design are used when developing new initiatives or making student-centered decisions.	Percentage of successful initiatives scaled and resourced.	25%	Broadly publicize results of each pilot project.
Enhance and leverage technology	Enhance and leverage technology and facilities.	Decision Support-developed reports/tools are publicized and utilized.	Number of active reporting tool users.	50 in first year	Provide training to faculty and staff on reporting tools.
Strengthen compliance and risk management	Strengthen compliance and risk management.	Mandated reporting is completed efficiently and on time.	Percentage of submissions locked by published due date.	100%	Create internal audit reports.

The Office of Administration (OA) developed an annual performance plan (APP) that facilitates incremental progress toward strategic plan initiatives (6.2.05 OA APP Dashboard). The APP objectives are derived from the Tier 2 Objectives for OA. Below is an excerpt from the OA 2018/2019 APP. The format of the APP is replicable and can be implemented across departments.

Office of Bookstore & Central Services												
<p>T2 Objective 1: Improve service excellence and strengthen communication across the college by establishing and maintaining a customer service culture in the bookstore and central services department. (Customer Service) (Supports SP Objectives 2, 7 & 13)</p>												
<p>Initiative 1.1: Respond to service surveys that identify customer needs and determine relevance and improvement opportunities for current and future departmental offerings.</p>												
FY 19 APP	<p>Office of Bookstore & Central Services Key Result 1 Customer service surveys that identify customer needs have been reviewed for relevance and departmental improvements have been identified and developed.</p>											
	<p>Action 1.1: Make it easier for students in independent studies to find their course materials. (Q1)</p>											
	<p>Action 1.2: Set up a message in the bookstore website indicating that a course is an OER course. (Q1)</p>											
<p>Action 1.3: Have a more easily accessible physical location for the bookstore in Saratoga Springs. (Q3)</p>			<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>FY 19</td> <td>FY 20</td> <td>FY 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> </tr> </table>				FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	X	X	X
FY 19	FY 20	FY 21										
X	X	X										
<p>Initiative 1.2: Identify barriers and expand academic and student support within bookstore services and central services that directly impact students to address gap areas in student lifecycle (e.g., first-to-second term retention)</p>												
FY 19 APP	<p>Office of Bookstore & Central Services Key Result 2 Barriers that directly impact student experience been addressed and improved within bookstore and central services to close the gaps within the student lifecycle and enhance retention.</p>											
	<p>Action 2.1: Strategize ways to lower the cost of course materials for students, which is a challenge for retention. (Q4)</p>											
	<p>Action 2.2: Work with the OER Committee to develop ways in which the bookstore can support and participate in the OER initiative. (Q1, 2, 3 & 4)</p>											
			<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> </tr> </table>				X	X	X			
X	X	X										

Table: Example of annual performance plan for Office of Administration (OA)

The Office of Administration is assessing all aspects of the plans at all levels on an ongoing basis. The process for assessing Tier I initiatives is underway. Initiative sponsors are required to complete a project charter for each initiative they propose (6.2.06 Strategic Plan Initiative Training Program). This charter asks for a description, objectives, requirements, deliverables, constraints, success criteria, risks, necessary resources, cost, and a timeline. Each charter must be approved by the project sponsor, technical lead, functional lead, and executive sponsor before the initiative is executed.

Criterion 3: A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution’s mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution’s and units’ strategic plans/objectives;

Effective resource management begins when strategic priorities are identified. At SUNY Empire State College, strategic planning has been a top priority as new plans have been developed while others are refreshed. The figure below shows the alignment of various plans and programs and the congruence of efforts to advance the college’s strategic plan objectives.

Strategic Plan Objective		SFP	AMP	FMP	DP	ITP	MP	RMP	HCP
1	Increase innovation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Improve service excellence		X	X	X	X			X
3	Enhance diversity		X	X	X				X
4	Leverage technology/facilities	X	X	X		X			X
5	Strengthen academic programs		X						
6	Improve student support		X			X			
7	Strengthen communication					X	X		X
8	Improve efficiencies	X		X		X			X
9	Diversify revenue	X				X			
10	Increase enrollment		X				X		
11	Strengthen compliance	X			X			X	X
12	Resource stewardship	X		X		X		X	X
13	Student experience		X	X					X
14	Improve retention/grad rates		X						
15	Enhance reputation		X				X		X

SFP: Strategic Financial Plan (6.1.04 Strategic Financial Plan 2021)

AMP: Academic Master Plan (6.1.03 Academic Master Plan 2019)

FMP: Facilities Master Plan (6.3.01 Facilities Master Plan 2018)

DP: Diversity and Inclusion Plan (6.3.02 DEI Plan 2017)

ITP: Information Technology Roadmap (6.1.05 Strategic Technology Roadmap 2018-2021)

MP: Marketing Plan

RMP: Risk Management Program (6.3.03 Budget Process and Risk Mgmt Jan2018)

HCP: Human Capital Plan (6.3.12 Human Capital Plan) (Draft)

The annual budget review process includes revenue and resource allocation planning. The budget process begins in a December–January timeframe with initial meetings early in the new year to review budget procedures and updates. Budget templates and narratives are provided to assess budget resources and how they are aligned to the strategic plan. In April, the requests/justifications are reviewed. In May–July, approval of the budget occurs. The preliminary budget is published and finalized in July in alignment with SUNY’s campus financial plan. Allocations are posted in September. Each division within the college has a financial analyst who assists during the budget planning phase and monitors spending on a monthly basis to ensure proper use of allocated funds and to determine future budget needs.

Upon the arrival of President Malatras in the summer of 2019, the finance and administration divisions were reorganized with finance reporting directly to the president. Previous administrations utilized a number of processes to examine resource allocation. For example, the Program, Planning, and Budget Committee (PPBC) was established to provide the president advice and guidance on the college's planning and budget matters. The committee engaged in discussions and decisions involving resource management. Additionally, the Office of Administration developed an innovative approach to allocate resources. Requests from the divisions/departments that could not be met from their own budget allocations would be captured as an unfunded request (UFR). The budget office and the compliance director established a template that captured detailed information for each UFR at the department level. Vice presidents were then encouraged to fund high-priority initiatives from existing resources (e.g. a lower-priority initiative that can remain unfunded). If the vice president could not fund a priority initiative, he or she endorsed the UFR to move forward to cabinet.

A National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) report titled "Meeting the Challenges of Enterprise Risk Management in Higher Education" suggested that institutions, "consider applying the ERM filter in the budget process ... the majority of participants felt that a standard template to analyze all the various risks associated with new strategic initiatives would be a useful tool for board members and senior management" (6.3.04 NACUBO). The compliance director developed a template to evaluate and score risk factors (6.3.05 UFR Template). A cost-effective, locally developed tool provides analytical data across three dimensions: strategic planning, return on investment, and risk assessment (6.3.06 UFR Dashboard).

By assessing risk (one of the strategic plan objectives), limited resources are better protected. The college identified the major types of risk that should be assessed: strategic, operational, financial, environmental, health, safety, reputation, technology, and legal. An enterprise risk management committee was established in 2018 that includes membership qualified to evaluate and address the various risk factors (6.3.07 Risk Mgmt Senate Update Jun2018). The committee, chaired by the compliance director, advises the cabinet on high-priority risks and compliance matters. They identify and prioritize risks and assist senior administrators in creating risk response plans. A risk dashboard displays the top risk list for the cabinet, along with risk assessment lists for senior administrators (6.3.08 Risk Mgmt Dashboard). As a result, the cabinet can now pursue more thoughtful deliberation to optimize resource allocation. The UFR tool, along with other risk management initiatives, was presented as a best practice at the SUNY Internal Controls/Risk Management Roundtable in November 2018 (6.3.09 IC Roundtable).

Currently, senior administrators are analyzing and reevaluating all budget and resource control processes. The chief of staff and chief financial officer have led the effort to align resources with strategic objectives by obtaining pre-approval for spending, developing risk-management strategies, and assessing business-process maps related to finance and budgeting. These analyses ensure that the institution is strategically investing its resources to further the college's mission.

The strategic planning committee has initiated cost and return-on-investment templates for each strategic planning initiative (6.3.10 Training Program Cost Sheet). The initiative manager identifies existing resources and new requirements in order to prioritize college resources and yield the biggest impact. As a result, there is total cost visibility over strategic planning initiatives that include personnel, contractual arrangements, equipment and supplies, and travel-related costs. This initiative is a key component of the five-year budget model since strategic planning initiative managers are asked to forecast all expenses over that time period.

Another initiative that ensures planning and resource alignment is the cabinet-level review of all new and backfilled faculty and staff vacancies. Similar to the UFR process, each senior administrator must document in a standard template the personnel requirement and how it links back to the college's mission, goals, and objectives (6.3.11 Staffing Request Review). One added outcome to this review is identification of staff sharing across divisional lines, promoting teamwork and collaboration as a result.

To ensure a regular cabinet-level review of college resources, a quarterly resource management (QRM) meeting was established (6.1.06 Quarterly Resource Management Mtgs). The purpose of the QRM meeting is for the president and senior staff (cabinet) to review and evaluate short-term and long-term resource trends at the college and to determine any necessary adjustments. Topics covered include: college- and VP-level budget to actual status, next year's budget, SUNY update/guidance, unfunded requests, five-year budget forecast, strategic financial plan, review of financial metrics, and human resources updates.

Criterion 4: Fiscal and human resources, as well as the physical and technical infrastructure adequate to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered;

Effective resource management goes beyond traditional budget review. It includes ensuring human, physical, and technological resources are adequate to support college operations wherever and however they are delivered. The wherever component is especially important at SUNY Empire State College, since we have more than 30 physical locations. In keeping with the college's mission, the leadership strives to assure easy access (no more than an approximately two-hour drive) to a college location for any prospective student in New York state. This goal aligned with the organizational structure of the college, which had a group of regional deans located in college centers—Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Hartsdale, Manhattan, and Old Westbury — as well as other senior academic leadership at the coordinating center in Saratoga Springs. Other locations, mostly smaller than the centers, were attached to the centers and reported through the regional deans. Deans controlled and guided the academic matters of the college and the operational matters — snow cancellations, class scheduling, supplies and services ordering, some marketing, some recruiting, community, and other assorted tasks related to keeping offices open and functioning.

In the new ESC 2.0 structure, the Office of Academic Affairs was reorganized and now reports along functional lines; the deans of business, social and behavioral sciences, human services, arts and humanities, and science, mathematics and technology manage the details of undergraduate personnel and curricula. Similarly, the School for Graduate Studies is organized and reports along functional divisions; the chair of the liberal arts and science division, the chair of the business management leadership group, and the chair of the education division report to the dean for the School of Graduate Studies. The dean of nursing and allied health manage those areas. An associate dean oversees the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies (HVACLS). A interim dean oversees digital learning, and a director is responsible for international programs. Finally, three interim vice provosts oversee broad functional areas, including academic affairs, academic administration, and student success.

The executive vice president for administration and chief operating officer supervises an executive director of regional operations, who in turn supervises a team of regional operations coordinators. This team also includes site coordinators for large locations across the state, as well as more than 20 location secretaries. The regional operations team manages the day-to-day functioning of the statewide footprint. They also work with deans, who communicate with faculty across the state. The executive director collaborates with senior administrators in academic affairs, administration, the president's office, and other VPs and AVPs as appropriate.

The college is also devising new ways to think about risk and compliance when it considers facilities use practice and policy. The goal is to review and develop a new policy regarding current leases and the possibilities for various uses; the proposed policy is under review by counsel. A collegewide security assessment was recently conducted to review the status of the physical infrastructure. The ERM is also discussing how the college uses its people to staff locations to ensure these locations are being used effectively, therefore optimizing physical and human resources.

As documented in the college's strategic financial plan (discussed at length below), the college is exploring the prospect of establishing an auxiliary services corporation, which might be an effective way to generate resources and to manage more carefully, but flexibly, the college's resources. The college now owns locations in Rochester and Selden that can be rented or sublet. This opens up new opportunities and revenue streams that were not previously available to the college.

Even in the midst of a constrained budget environment, the college is finding ways to demonstrate that it values the perspectives of its staff. The recent climate survey has shown declines in overall job satisfaction and through the work of the newly established climate committee, the college is working to improve the work environment (6.4.01 Climate Committee Update Jan2019; 6.4.02 Climate Survey Reports). The senate passed a resolution in Fall 2018 to re-constitute an ad hoc climate committee to address widespread concerns about the workplace environment. This committee shared its final report with the college community in May 2019, which included a series of recommendations for further exploration (6.4.07 Climate Report 2019). In response, the senate charged the climate committee at its June 2019 meeting to continue as they seek to foster respect and increase accountability at all levels across the college.

In many small and large ways, the college is empowering staff and faculty to do their work more effectively. For example, the Office of Human Resources is converting its website to the MyESC platform, offering easier access to employee information (6.4.03 MyESC Human Resources). The customer service feedback link offers "just in time" information to HR as it seeks to facilitate the work of the college (6.4.04 HR Customer Feedback Survey). The HR office is also communicating policy and processes more steadily. Two important examples are the implementation of the college's policy and procedure to address Part 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the college's civility policy (6.4.05 ADA Policy and Process; 6.4.06 Bullying and Civility Policy).

Criterion 5: Well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability;

Decision making at SUNY Empire State College is shaped by prominent groups that include the college council, president's cabinet, and shared governance. Organizational structures at the college are clearly delineated with well-defined reporting structures, performance management, and accountability. Management confidential employees are evaluated based on goals and targets for their respective areas.

To support its mission, the college has identified 15 strategic objectives. For each of these objectives, there are well-defined decision-making processes that provide accountability. Described below are several objectives that align with the mission to serve students with "innovative quality academic programs."

One strategic objective is to increase innovation. Directly in support of this objective are the strategic objectives of the college's information technology services (ITS). ITS has a strategic vision connected to the strategic plan; the three-year strategic roadmap was communicated to the college, and includes a focus on service innovation designed to connect users to trouble-shooting technologies that address issues and suggestions for improved service and quality (6.1.05 Strategic Technology Roadmap 2018-

Furthermore, to emphasize innovation through online curricula, the college created a new position, dean of digital learning, innovation, and strategy. This change was made to support the strategic objective regarding increased innovation as part of the process for continual improvement.

Another way in which the college improved its structure to support innovation is through the new organizational structure in the School for Undergraduate Studies. This ensures a continuous improvement in academic programs and guidelines through faculty oversight. Academic schools are effectively managed through clear lines of administration and improved communication channels. The undergraduate deans oversee improvements in quality and academic programs, which are conveyed to the interim vice provost for academic affairs (6.5.01 OAA Org Chart). This structure helps support the decision-making processes that allocate resources toward innovative programs.

The college has developed the necessary pathways to leverage college resources. This is consistent with the strategic objective to enhance and leverage technology and facilities. The college has a facilities master plan that provides the framework for discussion around utilizing locations in ways that will best serve our students. To ensure optimal use of the facilities, the interim vice provost for academic administration (OAA), executive director of regional operations (OEM), and interim director of facilities (OA) work together to address concerns at SUNY Empire State College locations.

Overall, the above describes the processes through which decisions are made about how resources are allocated to support innovation in programs and to support diversification of revenue streams. In addition, some of these processes were instituted as part of our pathway for continuous improvements in decision making.

Criterion 6: Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes;

SUNY Empire State College completed a facilities master plan (FMP) in 2011. The master planning team conducted another study in 2018 over the course of several months to review the status of the institution and confirm, alter, or re-direct the recommendations of the 2011 FMP (6.3.01 Facilities Master Plan 2018). This robust study included site visits, faculty/staff meetings, student surveys, planning analysis, demographic analysis, environment analysis, and lease analysis. Recommendations and an action plan were formalized relating to market strategy, mission, and operational administration, in addition to physical facilities.

The operating budget is used to provide normal maintenance at college locations. In addition, we partner with the SUNY Construction Fund (SUCF) to utilize the capital project fund (6.6.01 Annual Work Plan Meeting Sept2018). Annual allocation is based on a share of square footage. There are two components of this capital project fund. The first is minor critical maintenance (MCM). MCM funds are guaranteed annually by SUNY. The college prioritize projects and, after utilizing MCM funding, additional funds can be requested from the SUCF. Institutional resource planning and prioritization allow SUNY to refer to a five-year capital plan for an idea of what future projects are going to occur. SUNY can then request appropriate funding from New York state legislators.

The college has a technology strategic plan, which provides a roadmap for the years 2018–2021. In developing the technology strategic plan, a number of groups across the college were consulted, such as the Integrated Technology Committee (ITC) (6.1.05 Strategic Technology Roadmap 2018-2021; 6.6.02 Integrated Technology Committee). ITC is a collegewide governance committee of the college senate with representation from all geographic units of the college. Its charge states that ITC shall help shape the overall vision, strategy, and direction of all integrated technology and integrated technology policies implemented at the college. In the manner that the Program, Planning and Budget Committee (PPBC) advises administration on budget planning, ITC plays an advisory role in planning, prioritizing, and assessing the viability of all integrated technologies and integrated technology policies as they relate to the strategic mission of the college.

In addition, ITC has a standing ad hoc committee, the Emerging Technologies Advisory Group, whose charge is to assist in crafting the vision and strategic direction of the intake process for emerging technologies at SUNY Empire State College. This ad hoc advisory group's input and recommendations are intended to be representative of SUNY Empire State College's needs and pertain to the administration, budget, infrastructure, technical support, costs, membership categories, and present and future services of educational and emerging technologies (EET) for information technology services (ITS).

Criterion 7: An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter;

As part of the SUNY system, SUNY Empire State College does not produce its own annual independent audit. Rather, the audit is conducted at the system level (6.7.01 SUNY Financial Report 2018). However, the college has been proactive in requesting our specific financial information in order to produce annually the financial metrics outlined above and share these measures of fiscal health with the rest of the college. This aligns with MSCHE's Requirement of Affiliation #11: "The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis."

Criterion 8: Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals;

SUNY Empire State College's new strategic plan, *Going for the Gold*, reflects the college's commitment to ensure the robust future of the college. The strategic plan references desired financial outcomes while the 2021 strategic financial plan outlines actions necessary to meet our important educational goals (6.1.04 Strategic Financial Plan 2021).

As the college is dependent on tuition revenue (approximately 83% of the operating budget), the strategic financial plan identifies strategies to diversify the college's revenue streams (strategic plan objective #9). The first component is to grow enrollments and increase state support. The college will focus on growing enrollment through multiple strategies, including increased online course delivery, increased military and veteran population, and growth in sponsored programs and outreach. It is important to note that SUNY Empire State College receives less state support compared to other SUNY institutions. The college will continue to lobby for an increase in base budget allocation.

In addition to enrollment growth and additional state support, SUNY Empire State College will continue to pursue a more diversified revenue stream through a variety of measures. For example, the SUNY Empire State College Foundation provides invaluable support to the college through advancement efforts, alumni and student relations, scholarship, and loan assistance. The foundation manages more than \$30M in investments and provides nearly \$3M annually to directly benefit students, faculty, and collegewide initiatives. Up to \$1.3M is provided annually for short-term financial aid anticipation loans. The foundation is planning a comprehensive capital campaign that will be the first such campaign since 2009. A preliminary feasibility study was completed in May 2018, evaluating the interest and potential capacity for the initiative. The campaign will ensure that the new college president's vision and goals are factored in before officially launching. Initial priorities include:

- Financial aid and student completion initiatives
- Endowment growth – positions, programs, schools, etc.
- New signature programs and initiatives
- Fund for ESC (targets resource opportunities to advance the strategic plan)

The second component of the 2021 strategic financial plan is to manage and control expenses in order to be good stewards of state and tuition funds (strategic plan objective 12). According to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, “challenging financial times underscore the need for colleges and universities to have a deep understanding of their fiscal health.” The strategic financial plan lays out a roadmap for increasing revenue while controlling and managing expenses (6.1.04 Strategic Financial Plan 2021). The third element, monitoring progress, measures how effective the journey has been. There will be multiple means of measurement and evaluation. The following objectives will meet our goal of reducing expenses by 2021 and are shown in summary form.

- Reduce Lease Expenses: By more effectively managing the leasing costs associated with our statewide footprint, we can reduce lease-related expenses by 25 percent.
- Initiatives targeting recurring costs:
 - Managed Print Services: The procurement office is partnering with the print shop to provide more efficient use of the college's printing requirements.
 - Creating Incentives in Budget Process: The college will strive for a more decentralized and more empowering budget approach. If innovative measures or good stewardship practices produce expense reduction, the department should be allowed to keep a portion of the savings and use it to supplement their allocation.
 - Strategic Procurement: The college will pursue a deliberative process of strategic procurement to identify significant cost reductions in purchasing supplies, equipment, and services. Use of best practices should be pursued.
 - Leverage Technology: The college can leverage technology in a variety of ways, including the expansion of immersive cloud learning (ICL) and continuing to pursue efficiencies from the enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation.
 - Robust Training Program: As with technology, proper training resources can enhance productivity, employee morale, and engagement. A robust training program should be comprehensive and meet a continuum of requirements.

- Use of Financial Metrics to Measure Fiscal Health: The college will constantly assess its fiscal health using key financial metrics (6.8.01 College Council Financial Update Mar2019).
 - Composite Financial Index (CFI): Originally designed by the Big 4 accounting firm, KPMG, key benchmarks were established to assess the financial health of universities and colleges.
 - Primary Reserve Ratio: This ratio explores whether an institution's resources are sufficient and flexible or liquid enough to support its mission.
 - Net Operating Revenues Ratio: This ratio looks at whether operating results show that the institution is living within its available resources.
 - Return on Net Position Ratio: This ratio examines how well the institution's asset performance and management supports its strategic direction.
- Strategic Financial Plan End-of-Year Reporting: An end-of-year narrative report will assess the effectiveness of efforts to grow revenue and control expenses, providing transparency to stakeholders such as the college council, faculty, staff, and students.
- 5-Year Budget Forecasting: One of the strategic plan initiatives, a multi-year budget, will analyze trends to forecast the college's future fiscal health and determine if strategic financial plan objectives are met.

Other financial metrics and strategies will be used to measure all aspects of financial health. For example, the college reviews the campus financial risk accountability report provided by the SUNY Research Foundation, which shows good stewardship of our sponsored program grants (6.8.02 Risk Accountability Report 3Q19).

Criterion 9: Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

SUNY Empire State College collects empirical evidence and uses this information to make operational decisions. For example, the college engages in periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources. As mentioned earlier, strategic planning objective owners are required to complete a project charter for all strategic initiatives they plan to implement. In addition to creating a project charter that must undergo a rigorous approval process, objective owners are required to work in consultation with Decision Support staff to create measures or key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the progress being made toward the objective. These KPIs will be quantitative in nature and tracked through a dashboard, which will be widely available and easily updated.

In addition, Decision Support collaborates with stakeholders from across the college to conduct studies that inform operational decision making. Below is a sample of studies conducted in recent years and the data-driven decisions that resulted.

Table: Sample of Studies Conducted to Support Decision Making

Study	Partners	Description	Results	Data-driven Decision(s)
Locations Analysis (6.9.01 Locations Analysis)	Enrollment management and administration	Identified enrollment trends and population demographics by zip code for areas across NYS	Certain areas of NYS have higher concentrations of SUNY Empire students and NYS residents who are 25+ with some college but no degree.	Opened, closed, and relocated locations across NYS
Overload Policy (6.9.02 Overload Policy)	Deans	Studied students who took > 16 credits in a term	Students with an approved degree plan, 12 or more SUNY Empire credits, and a course completion rate of 90%+ were more likely to complete all of their courses when taking > 16 credits in a term.	Created a policy stating that students must meet the aforementioned criteria to take > 16 credits in a term
Re-recruiting Stop-outs (6.9.03 Re-recruiting Stop-outs)	Deans	Examined students who missed 2+ terms at SUNY Empire prior to graduating based on their likelihood of re-enrolling and graduating	Students with an approved degree plan and a course completion rate of 67%+ were more likely to re-enroll and graduate.	Conducted an outreach campaign to re-engage this population
Black Male Initiative (6.9.04 Black Male Initiative Comparison Study 2016)	New York City-based faculty	Examined the course completion and retention rates of students who participated in the Black Male Initiative in comparison with their non-participant peers	BMI participants had significantly higher course completion and retention rates.	Allocated funding for a first-year cohort program with intensive mentoring and academic support for black males
Term Length Study (6.9.05 Term Length Study)	Academic Affairs	Examined course outcomes by length of course	Students taking 8-week courses had comparable or higher course completion rates/grades in comparison with students taking 15-week courses.	Continued to offer 8-week courses. Plans to expand these offerings are underway.

Furthermore, the college conducts or participates in numerous surveys to assess the experiences of our students, faculty, and staff. The table below is a brief summary of these efforts. Results from these surveys are widely disseminated, and the appropriate parties address areas of concern.

Table: Surveys to Assess the Perspectives of Students, Faculty, and Staff

Survey Title	Population of Respondents	Survey Description	Administration	Stakeholders Reviewing Results
Student Assessment of Learning Experiences (6.9.06 Student Assessment of Learning Experiences)	Undergraduate and graduate students	The survey asks students about their experience in the course and the faculty member's responsiveness, knowledge, and effectiveness.	Two weeks prior to the end of term for each term in the academic year	Provost, deans, and other personnel with supervisory responsibilities for faculty/course instructors.
Primary Mentor Survey (6.9.07 Primary Mentor Survey)	Undergraduate and graduate students	This survey asks students about their experience with their primary mentor, as well as their mentor's responsiveness, knowledge, and effectiveness.	Twice per year based on the tenure and promotion review schedule for each faculty member	Provost, deans, and other personnel with supervisory responsibilities for faculty/course instructors.
Faculty Workplace Climate Survey (6.9.10 Faculty Climate Survey Report 2018)	Line-based faculty with an appointment percentage of half-time or greater	The survey asks faculty about their overall experience at the college, as well as specific issues (e.g., tenure and promotion process and faculty workload)	Once every three years	College leadership, governance committees, and the college community in general
Staff Workplace Climate Survey (6.9.11 Staff Climate Survey Report)	Management confidential employees, professional employees, and support staff with an appointment percentage of half-time or greater	The survey has items asking employees about their overall experience at the college as well as specific issues (e.g., professional development and advancement opportunities)	Once every three years	College leadership, governance committees, and the college community in general

Student Opinion Survey (3.5.04 Student Opinion Comparison)	SUNY Empire State College students	This survey asks students about their experiences and plans, academic and college services, facilities, and outcomes.	Once every three years	College faculty and staff in functional offices (e.g., the Office of Financial Aid)
National Survey of Student Engagement (6.9.08 National Survey of Student Engagement)	A random sample of first-year students and students in the final year of their program.	This survey measures the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices associated with learning and personal growth.	Once every three years	College faculty and college administrators

Summary of findings for Standard VI

SUNY Empire State College’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned and sufficient to fulfill the college’s mission and goals. The college engaged in a collaborative strategic planning process that resulted in the articulation of overarching themes and objectives that inform institutional planning, resource allocation, and institutional assessment.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College’s strategic plan is well aligned with its mission, vision, and goals, and provides a framework for resource allocation.
- The college’s reorganization has improved operational consistency, and it will continue to engage in periodic assessment of these changes.
- The college’s Office of Administration is engaged in developing a human capital plan that will provide a robust strategy across the full spectrum of human resources, including recruiting, onboarding, training, employee interaction (i.e., civility and bullying), affirmative action, recognition, retention, and exit interviews.
- The recent climate survey has shown declines in overall job satisfaction, and through the work of the newly established climate committee, the college is working to improve the work environment.

Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

Criterion 1: A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students;

The administrative and governance structures at SUNY Empire State College are clearly articulated and codified in policies, practices, and documents that are transparent and available to the college community and the public, aligning with MSCHE’s Requirement of Affiliation #12: “The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution’s governing body is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution’s mission is being accomplished.” Article 8 of the State Education Law, “State University and State Financial Assistance for Higher Education,” and Section 352 confirm our status as a public institution, as noted in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.

As one of SUNY’s comprehensive colleges, the college is governed by the SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT), which appoints the college president, allocates resources to the college, and regulates curricula and all other matters pertaining to the operation and administration of each state-operated campus. Unlike private colleges, which typically have a closer relationship with their BOTs, the SUNY BOT meets regularly with the SUNY chancellor to discuss issues that impact the entire system (7.1.01 SUNY Board of Trustees; 7.1.02 SUNY Trustees Policies 2019; 7.1.03 SUNY Governance).

Additionally, each SUNY institution has a campus-specific college council, which fosters positive relations between the institution and the communities it serves and promotes the institution’s interests (7.1.05 ACT Handbook). Members of the college council are drawn from across the state (7.1.04 College Council Membership). Nine members are appointed by the governor of New York. The college council also has a student representative who is a voting member. Until this past year, the college had difficulty getting college council member appointments, but it has recently reached full membership. These members are highly qualified and represent the diversity of the student population.

The president of SUNY Empire State College reports directly to the SUNY chancellor and is further advised by the college council. As noted in Section 356 of State Law Duties of Councils (7.1.06 NYS 356 Duties of Councils), the college council holds several prescribed functions to:

- Conduct the search for the president when needed
- Review all major plans set forth by the president with respect to college operations
- Make regulations governing the buildings and equipment
- Review proposed budget requests and make recommendations to the trustees
- Approve the student conduct policy

Transparency is ensured by the SUNY BOT and the college council through an open meeting law that requires the public be invited to the meetings of these bodies and that the meetings be broadcasted. (7.1.07 Open Meetings Law).

SUNY has a university faculty senate (UFS) that is active across the state with representation from each of the state-operated SUNY institutions. The UFS is responsible for many policies that are of interest to the college. Members of the SUNY Empire State College community serve on UFS committees, and the college assembly elects one individual to serve as the college's UFS representative.

SUNY also has a statewide student assembly (SA). Student representatives are elected from each campus, giving students a statewide voice across the SUNY system. The SA provides students with a forum for consultation and to provide feedback to the chancellor and BOT on issues and opportunities that arise. SUNY Empire State College has been an active participant of the SA, with a former student having served a two-year term as its president.

The bylaws of SUNY Empire State College define a structure of campus-based shared governance that “promote[s] broad and responsible participation of the members of the college in the decisions that will lead the college towards the achievement of its purpose” (7.1.08 ESC Bylaws 2019-20).

The college senate and its standing committees help advance the institution's mission by fostering open dialogue among its constituents and with administration. All members of the college community are represented by the governance model, including faculty, professional employees, staff, and students, with representation from academic, professional, staff, and regional governance units. This model is a strength of the college, as all voices are heard and recognized as adding value to deliberations about college business (7.1.10 Governance Flowchart). All College Senate meetings are broadcast through ESC-TV.

The college senate acts for the voting membership of the college assembly and is comprised of the chairs of the 10 governance standing committees, representatives from each governance unit, the university faculty senator, the chair of the Program, Planning and Budget Committee, two student senators, the college's president, and the SUNY chancellor (7.1.09 ESC Bylaws Article3A). One standing committee, the Governance Operations and Review Committee, is charged with the biennial review of the bylaws and training of all members of governance.

Each governance unit is guided by bylaws that specify areas such as voting membership, standing committees, meeting frequency, and election and amendment processes. The bylaws are voted on by that governance unit and approved by the president. Given changes made to the governance to reflect the organizational structure of the college, governance unit bylaws are in various stages of development and approval; the academic governance unit bylaws have been approved.

Academic policy and program changes are approved through shared governance. Changes can be initiated by members of the college community, and proposals are reviewed through multiple consultative steps. The review processes are extensive and can be lengthy. There have been recent examples where policy or program changes have been expedited as a result of shared interests and consultation.

Given the population of students served by SUNY Empire State College, it is often difficult for students to take part in governance due to time and distance, so the college takes extra efforts to give students a voice in decision making at the college. Students are included in the college's shared governance system. Students comprise half of the Student Affairs Committee and the co-chair serves on the college senate, in addition to two student senators. Student representation is also included on presidential search committees. There is also an active alumni federation board.

Criterion 2. a legally constituted governing body that:

a. Serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;

The college was established through New York State law as a part of the State University of New York (SUNY). SUNY is broadly overseen by the University of the State of New York and the Board of Regents (7.1.01 SUNY Board of Trustees; 7.2.02 SUNY BOT-General Summary). The SUNY BOT and the college's College Council have the responsibility and authority to fulfill their roles to ensure that the college fulfills its public mission, serving the people of the state of New York and beyond. The college's president is obligated to provide SUNY an annual report that outlines how the college is fulfilling its mission (7.2.01 Presidents Report 2018). The college council actively participated in discussions related to mission review, strategic planning, college leases and new building plans and other financial matters (7.2.03 College Council Minutes).

b. Has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;

The SUNY BOT and SUNY Empire State College's college council is constituted of individuals who are experientially qualified to hold such posts and work toward the betterment of public higher education in New York (7.2.04 SUNY Trustees; 7.1.04 College Council Membership). The policies of SUNY Empire State College, the State University of New York, and the State of New York ensure independence and the avoidance of undue influences. These include the SUNY Conflict of Interest Policy and the Public Officers Law 73 and 74 (7.2.05 Conflict of Interest; 7.2.06 Public Officers Law 73; 7.2.07 Public Officers Law 74). Each SUNY Empire State College council member has signed a conflict of interest form that aligns with the MSCHE's Requirement of Affiliation #13: "A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict of interest policy that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body."

c. Ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;

Day to day operations of SUNY Empire State College are the responsibility of the president and his or her senior staff. Both the SUNY BOT and the college council have clear lines of responsibility within a complex governance structure that emphasizes the respective roles of SUNY governance, local governance, and the responsibilities of the president and the cabinet. Open meetings of both the SUNY BOT and the college council afford students and the public the opportunity to see agendas in advance and witness the deliberations of these respective groups.

d. Oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;

The SUNY Board of Trustees (7.1.01 SUNY Board of Trustees) has the authority to:

- Grant all degrees, diplomas and certificates for the completion of studies at any state-operated campus, including honorary degrees.
- Regulate the admission of students and prescribe qualifications for their continued attendance.
- Regulate tuition, fees and charges, curricula, and all other matters pertaining to the operation and administration of each state-operated campus.

e. Plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;

The SUNY BOT provides administrative and fiscal institutional oversight as specified in 7.2.08 SUNY BOT Powers and Duties. Some of these duties include:

- Overall central administration, supervision, and coordination of the state-operated campuses.
- General supervision over requests for appropriations, budgets, estimates, and expenditures of statutory colleges.
- Review and coordination of budget and appropriation requests of all state-operated institutions and statutory colleges; combine with fiscal requirements of community colleges and combine into a single university program budget for submission to the governor, together with appropriate comments from independent colleges that operate the statutory colleges.
- Prepare annual reports to the governor and other state officials; submit bimonthly reports of receipts and disbursements.
- Regulate tuition, and other fees and charges.

In addition, SUNY Empire's college council is delegated by the trustees of the State University of New York (7.1.06 NYS 356 Duties of Councils) to review the proposed college budget plan and recommend a budget to the state university trustees. The college council meetings are designed to provide council members with current information about the college so that they may be able to advise the president with full confidence.

f. Appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the chief executive officer;

Upon recommendation of the SUNY chancellor, the SUNY BOT appoints SUNY presidents and prescribes their functions, powers, and duties. The president of SUNY Empire State College is evaluated annually by the chancellor. SUNY administrations have taken different approaches to presidential evaluations over the years. The current chancellor, Dr. Johnson, is taking a more systematic approach to evaluating presidents. Each president receives specific, SUNY-generated information about their campus along with the ability to provide a narrative description of events on campus, as well as additional information to provide context on an annual basis. Topics that are part of the presidential evaluation include student enrollments and retention, fundraising, campus events, and major speeches and addresses delivered by the president.

g. Is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance;

The governing bodies for the college, through their various charges, provide guidance and direction for the institution. Each follows best practices in governance through its policies and procedures (7.1.06 NYS 356 Duties of Councils, 7.2.08 SUNY BOT Powers and Duties). College council members regularly participate in Association of College Members and College Trustees (ACT) training programs and meetings (7.2.09 SUNY ACT).

h. Establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure the impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest;

The SUNY BOT code of conduct policy clearly addresses potential conflicts of interest that could impact any college council or BOT member (7.2.10 SUNY BOT Code of Conduct). College council members have signed conflict of interest statements and were all oriented to the responsibilities of the council position (7.2.11 College Council Ethical Conduct).

In addition, as state employees, members of the college community are covered by the New York State Public Officers Law and Civil Service Law, which requires certain employees with decision-making authority to file annual financial disclosure statements to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) (2.4.04 JCOPE Jurisdiction and Authority).

i. Supports the chief executive officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution;

The SUNY BOT and College Council, through their respective roles, support the president and recognize his legal authority and accountability as outlined in the BOT policies (7.1.02 SUNY Trustees Policies 2019).

Criterion 3. a Chief Executive Officer who:

a. Is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;

The SUNY BOT policies clearly articulate the authority and responsibilities of a president of a SUNY campus (7.3.01 SUNY President; 7.1.02 SUNY Trustees Policies 2019). SUNY presidents are excluded from serving as chair of the SUNY BOT or their institution's college council.

b. Has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;

Dr. Jim Malatras started as president of SUNY Empire State College on July 15, 2019 after an extensive national search following SUNY protocols (7.3.02 SUNY Pres Search Guidelines). President Malatras was the president of the Rockefeller Institute of Government and has extensive background in New York state government, as well as a long tenure with SUNY. President Malatras holds a doctorate in political science from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the State University of New York at Albany, where he received the Presidential Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation Award. He also holds a master's and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University at Albany. President Malatras' vitae shows he is academically and experientially qualified to hold the position of president (7.3.03 Malatras CV).

President Malatras replaced Dr. Merodie Hancock, who served as president of the college from 2013-2018. Prior to Dr. Hancock, Dr. Alan Davis served as the president from 2009-2012. In the years in between presidents, interim leadership was named by SUNY. The chief executive officers of the college have all been appropriately qualified to hold this position.

c. Has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;

The authority and autonomy of the president is delineated in the SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees (7.1.02 SUNY Trustees Policies 2019). The presidents have had sufficient autonomy to fulfill their responsibilities.

d. Has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the chief executive officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness;

The president determines the structure and scope of the administrative structure at the college (7.4.01 ESC Organization Chart). The president is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the institution and the development, implementation, and achievement of a strategic plan (1.1.01 Going for the Gold).

The president works with the cabinet to assess institutional efficiency and effectiveness. The strategic plan identifies strategic objectives, and each unit has unit-level plans to meet those objectives, which are reviewed at the cabinet level.

Criterion 4. An administration possessing or demonstrating:

a. An organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships;

The organizational chart of the president's office summarizes the positions and reporting relationships of the senior leadership at the college (7.4.01 ESC Organization Chart). There are two executive vice presidents:

- Meg Benke, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost (7.4.02 Org Chart OAA), who oversees the deans for the School for Graduate Studies (7.4.03 Org Chart Graduate Studies) and the School of Nursing and Allied Health (7.4.04 Org Chart SONAH)
- Beth Berlin, executive vice president for administration and chief operating officer (7.4.05 Org Chart Administration)

The divisions in the Office of Academic Affairs are overseen by three interim vice provosts (7.4.02 Org Chart OAA):

- Tai Arnold, interim vice provost for student success
- John Lawless, interim vice provost for academic administration
- Nikki Shrimpton, interim vice provost for academic affairs, who oversees the deans for the School for Undergraduate Studies

b. An appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the chief executive officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities;

The president, executive vice president for academic affairs, and executive vice president for administration are qualified for the functions they lead as evidenced by their credentials (7.3.03 Malatras CV, 7.4.06 Benke CV; 7.4.07 Berlin CV). These three individuals supervise more than 30 administrators (e.g., deans, associate vice presidents, directors) who must meet the required qualifications for the posted position. Reporting lines are clearly demarcated, the structure of the college is logically defined, and the administration is appropriate for the size and type of delivery offered.

The cabinet size and function have varied over different presidencies. The climate study indicated that there have been challenges in the transitions for the community understanding various procedural processes and administrative responsibilities under the ESC 2.0 changes. Various efforts have been made to streamline and clarify reporting relationships. Most recently, operations and enrollment management were unified under the executive vice president for administration. In the Office of Academic Affairs, retention efforts were consolidated under the interim vice provost for student success, and the Office of Decision Support was brought under the provost. These efforts were made to bring focus to enrollment and retention.

c. Members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles;

The administrators at SUNY Empire State College are well qualified educationally and experientially for the titles they hold. Senior staff are generally hired from national searches.

The college continues to examine the diversity of the faculty, staff, and leadership of the community to better match the student constituency (2.2.02 DEI Plan 2017). As a part of SUNY's Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth (PRODiG), there is an examination of better ways to promote and retain diverse individuals (2.2.21 PRODiG Award).

d. Skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties;

The organizational charts for each school at SUNY Empire State College demonstrate that each senior administrator has an administrative structure that affords the resources necessary to successfully execute their responsibilities. The college recently invested in changes to the technology enterprise systems, and reporting capabilities were challenged for key decision data. Technology, information systems, and data have been updated, and analytical capabilities are being restored.

e. Regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives;

The college administration regularly engages with faculty and students on administrative and academic issues. The president and senior administrators share information and engage the community through town halls, regional visits, Exchange announcements, faculty and student conferences and retreats, and social media, among other modes. There is an All College meeting in the spring where all members of the college community come together, as well as a fall academic conference where all faculty and academic staff meet and engage in academic discussions.

The provost meets with an extended provost's cabinet that includes current and former faculty leaders of the college senate. These meetings provide opportunities for issues from the college community to be discussed with senior academic administration, and for the provost to gather information and gain insights that inform decisions and initiatives.

The deans meet regularly with their school's department chairs and academic planning committees, which include department chairs, the school's senator, and other colleagues as defined in each school's bylaws.

The college administration engages with students face-to-face during two annual college events: the student academic conference and the student wellness retreat. At each event, administrators conduct a town hall, attend student presentations, and engage in meet and greets. Regional locations also sponsor student events where administrators, faculty, and students interact. Finally, for the past several years, students have been invited to attend a winter leadership retreat, where students have opportunities to meet with members of the administration. Students are also periodically surveyed related to particular issues. For example, recent survey results have encouraged the development of a dean's list and a winter commencement ceremony.

f. Systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations; and

The college uses a variety of methods to assess and evaluate administrative units. Below are several examples:

- The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey administered by Harvard University has been and will continue to be administered to faculty in order to track changes and improvements over time. The Climate Survey is also used by the Office of Academic Affairs and other divisions to improve services internally.
- The College created a one-stop model and call center for student and administrative services and also utilizes a “service now” system for technology or systems requests. These systems allow for aggregated and continuous assessment of administrative areas for service or operational improvements.
 - The practice of registration cancellation due to nonpayment has been in place at SUNY Empire State College since 2006. While the process undergoes regular review to ensure compliance with SUNY and college policies, the 2018 Fall term presented a unique opportunity (implementation of a new enterprise management system) to review the protocols for this practice. An analysis of the receivables for the term pointed to limited receivable risk for the college when students owed less than \$1,000 at the start of the term, and higher risk when balances were above \$1,000. Several changes in the cancellation for nonpayment process were made as a result, including raising the threshold for cancellation to \$1,000; initiating a collegewide effort to proactively contact students at risk for cancellation; making changes in the cancellation calendar; and increasing communications about students’ financial responsibilities (7.4.08 Dereg Report; 7.4.09 Dereg Town_Hall).
- In the academic support area, staff reviewed the time and use of embedded supports in courses and workshop attendance. A shift was made to offer a comprehensive service, Jump Start, after the first week of the term (7.4.10 JumpStart).
- A comprehensive effort is underway by the college to examine facility usage and selection of locations (7.4.11 SCND Buffalo; 7.4.12 ESC Students Buffalo).
- The Office of Administration administered a service quality survey, which it used to make improvements to a variety of services.

Criterion 5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.

The president and SUNY Empire State College are evaluated annually by the chancellor. In addition, the college previously made use of 360-degree evaluations of senior management as a comprehensive professional development review. These reviews, conducted at the dean level and above, resulted in increased individual and group professional development.

Administrative effectiveness is linked and assessed relative to the strategic plan, *Going for the Gold* (1.1.01 Going for the Gold). Metrics have been established for key objectives and progress is tracked on these objectives. In the administrative area, there is a strong focus on financial efficiencies. There has been success in the areas of: reduction of lease costs, streamlining operations (e.g., outsourcing the bookstore operations), and realignment of related staff. In student affairs there is also progress related to student retention.

In recent years, the college's shared governance representation has evolved to align with its new organizational structure. A committee to rethink the governance model was formed to examine the necessary changes to the college's governance system. This new governance model contains representatives from the regional areas, academic schools, and professional areas. An evaluation of the governance structure is currently underway, corresponding to the changes that were implemented as a result of ESC 2.0, with planned recommendation for this spring.

Summary of findings for Standard VII

SUNY Empire State College is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its mission and goals. The college's governing structures include the SUNY board of trustees, SUNY Empire State College's college council, and shared governance as specified in SUNY Empire State College's bylaws. The chief executive officer has the appropriate credentials and professional experience to lead the college, and the college leadership is appropriate in size and includes administrators who are qualified for their positions. The college continues to refine its administrative and shared governance structures to align with the reorganized ESC 2.0.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College's governance and leadership structures are clearly articulated and transparent and provide the means necessary to lead a distributed campus environment.
- The college's shared governance is inclusive, representing faculty, professional employees, and staff.
- Members of the administrative staff will participate in ongoing comprehensive professional development reviews. In order to continually improve and innovate, these types of reviews should continue with input from members of faculty and the college community.
- Given the large number of changes within the administrative structure and governance model, an evaluation of the ESC 2.0 model should continue.
- Leadership, administration, and governance should continue to innovate and expand their engagement with students.

Self-Study Conclusions and Suggestions

Summary of findings for Standard I

The college has a mission that clearly articulates its purpose and goals and reflects the needs of the diverse student population it serves. Faculty and staff exhibit a deep commitment to the college's mission and its students. This mission is reviewed periodically and revised when appropriate. The college's strategic goals are consistent with the mission and are evaluated to ensure institutional and academic quality improvement.

Strengths and suggestions:

- The college mission is valued by all members of the college community.
- The college has a well-developed strategic plan and should continue its efforts in realizing its overarching themes and objectives.
- The institution will continue to build community across a distributed campus.

Summary of findings for Standard II

The college community demonstrates a strong commitment to its mission. Through its interactions and activities, SUNY Empire State College engages in practices that are ethical, truthful, and respectful. The college's commitment to academic and intellectual freedom is evident in its policies, and its practices support a climate of respect and engagement. The college has systems in place to comply with all requirements, honor its commitments, and represent itself truthfully.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has a strong commitment to ethical practices and to maintaining compliance at the local, state, and federal levels.
- The institutional climate was impacted by the transition to ESC 2.0. The college should continue its efforts to understand the issues and identify solutions.
- The college successfully received funding from SUNY to increase the number of historically underrepresented faculty through the PRODiG initiative. SUNY Empire State College is committed to increasing diversity across the college.

Summary of findings for Standard III

SUNY Empire State College has many strengths in the design and delivery of the student learning experience, as well as opportunities for improvement. The college provides diverse learning experiences through multiple modalities. Having full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty across all schools sets the college apart from nontraditional higher-education peers. Faculty enhance the college's intellectual life, provide service through governance, and create new knowledge through scholarship. The faculty review process ensures a rigorous procedure for evaluating the quality of faculty in program delivery. The Center for Mentoring, Learning, and Academic Innovation (CMLAI) provides ongoing support for professional development of faculty. The college's mentoring model is unique in the SUNY system, as well as in higher education. General education is a strength — the college has a long history of the general education program and assessment. Periodic reports and communications from Decision Support help drive improvement by providing relevant data to the college community.

Strengths and suggestions:

- SUNY Empire State College has a robust course catalog and is the largest provider of online programming in the SUNY system.
- The college is committed to supporting faculty in the reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes, and will continue to work on ways to improve its support of faculty.
- The institution continues to strategically hire faculty that best support academic programming and locations.

Summary of findings for Standard IV

SUNY Empire State College recruits and admits diverse students whose interests and goals are congruent with its mission. The college promotes student success through effective academic supports maintained by engaged and committed professionals. These professionals enhance the learning experience and foster student retention, persistence, and completion.

Strengths and suggestions

- SUNY Empire State College has a strong commitment to increased access and reduced costs of textbooks through engagement in the NYS SUNY Open Educational Resources (OER) Funding Initiative and the Joyce S. McKnight OER Academy. The college should continue to find new avenues to increase access and reduce costs to students.
- The college's innovative approach to student services has been successful in promoting student persistence across a distributed environment. Continued work in this area would further strengthen these efforts.
- The college has had success with its Black Male Initiative Fortified Classroom (BMIFC) and, this year, increased funding to further expand this initiative. In addition, the institution is well positioned to extend this work to other student populations.

Summary of findings for Standard V

SUNY Empire State College actively engages in the ongoing assessment of student learning. The results of these assessments demonstrate that students successfully meet educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education. The college's structural changes in recent years, particularly at the undergraduate level, from regional academic centers to discipline-based departments and schools, will provide opportunities to further strengthen academic quality and enhance the student experience. The impact of these changes will be captured as the college engages in ongoing cycles of outcomes assessment and will inform future efforts toward continual improvement.

Strengths and suggestions

- SUNY Empire State College has clear learning goals at the program and institution levels that align with the college's commitment to delivering innovative, flexible, and quality academic programs.
- The college is well regarded by students and employers as indicated by student opinion and employer surveys.
- The college has a long history of outcomes assessment, with faculty engagement at every level, i.e. identification of samples, development of rubrics, evaluation of samples, discussion of results, and implementation of findings.
- Given the restructuring associated with ESC 2.0, the college will continue to assess the impact of these changes on academic quality, student learning and achievement, and student support services.

Summary of findings for Standard VI

SUNY Empire State College's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned and sufficient to fulfill the college's mission and goals. The college engaged in a collaborative strategic planning process that resulted in the articulation of overarching themes and objectives that inform institutional planning, resource allocation, and institutional assessment.

Strengths and suggestions

- SUNY Empire State College's strategic plan is well aligned with its mission, vision, and goals, and provides a framework for resource allocation.
- The college's reorganization has improved operational consistency, and it will continue to engage in periodic assessment of these changes.
- The college's Office of Administration is engaged in developing a human capital plan that will provide a robust strategy across the full spectrum of human resources, including recruiting, onboarding, training, employee interaction (i.e., civility and bullying), affirmative action, recognition, retention, and exit interviews.
- The recent climate survey has shown declines in overall job satisfaction, and through the work of the newly established climate committee, the college is working to improve the work environment.

Summary of findings for Standard VII

SUNY Empire State College is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its mission and goals. The college's governing structures include the SUNY board of trustees, SUNY Empire State College's college council, and shared governance as specified in SUNY Empire State College's bylaws. The chief executive officer has the appropriate credentials and professional experience to lead the college, and the college leadership is appropriate in size and includes administrators who are qualified for their positions. The college continues to refine its administrative and shared governance structures to align with the reorganized ESC 2.0.

Strengths and suggestions

- SUNY Empire State College's governance and leadership structures are clearly articulated and transparent and provide the means necessary to lead a distributed campus environment.
- The college's shared governance is inclusive, representing faculty, professional employees, and staff.
- Members of the administrative staff will participate in ongoing, comprehensive, professional-development reviews. In order to continually improve and innovate, these types of reviews should continue with input from members of faculty and the college community.
- Given the large number of changes within the administrative structure and governance model, an evaluation of the ESC 2.0 model should continue.
- Leadership, administration, and governance should continue to innovate and expand their engagement with students.

Middle States Self-Study 2020 – Steering Committee and Working Groups

Steering Committee

Name	Membership	Title
Mary Mawn	Co-Chair	Dean, School of Science, Mathematics and Technology
John Lawless	Co-Chair	Interim Vice Provost for Academic Administration
Aaron Gladd	Member	Chief of Staff
Anastasia Pratt	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities and Chair of the College Senate
Bridget Nettleton	At Large Member	Dean, School of Nursing and Allied Health
Christopher Whann	Member	Executive Director of Regional Operations
Dana Gliserman-Kopans	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
David Puskas	Member	Director of Academic Review
Desalyn De-Souza	Member	Dean, School of Human Services
Diana Centanni	Member	Academic Advisor, School of Undergraduate Studies
Duncan RyannMann	Member	Professor, School of Business
Eileen McDonnell	Member	Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, MSCHE Accreditation Liaison Officer
Elizabeth Berlin	At Large Member	Executive Vice President for Administration, Chief Operating Officer
Elliott Dawes	At Large Member	Chief Diversity Officer
Frank Vander Valk	Member	Interim Dean of Digital Learning, Innovation, and Strategy; Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Ian Reifowitz	Member	Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Jane Greiner	Member	Interim Assistant Director of Instructional Design
Jim Malatras	Member	President
Julie Gedro	Member	Dean, School of Business
Kim Stote	Member	Associate Dean, School of Nursing and Allied Health
Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Meg Benke	At Large Member	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chief Academic Officer, and former Middle States Commissioner
Nan Travers	Member	Director, Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning
Nathan Gonyea	Member	Dean, School for Graduate Studies
Paul Miller	Member	Associate Professor, Historical Studies
Sadie Ross	Member	Director, Compliance and Environmental Sustainability
Tai Arnold	Member	Interim Vice Provost for Student Success
Thalia MacMillan	Member	Associate Professor, School of Human Services

Standard 1 Working Group - Mission and Goals

Name	Membership	Title
Anastasia Pratt	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Nathan Gonyea	Co-Chair	Dean, School for Graduate Studies
Andrea Hennessy	Member	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing
Anna Bates	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Gina Torino	Member	Associate Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Peggy Tally	Member	Professor, School for Graduate Studies, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor
Richard Savior	Member	Assistant Professor, School of Business

Standard 2 Working Group - Ethics and Integrity

Name	Membership	Title
Frank Vander Valk	Co-Chair	Interim Dean of Digital Learning, Innovation, and Strategy; Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Paul Miller	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
AmyRuth Tobol	Member	Associate Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Debra Monte	Member	Coordinator of Student Academic Services
Dee Britton	Member	Associate Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Diane Gal	Member	Associate Professor, School for Graduate Studies
Karen Tanski	Member	Senior Director of Marketing and Creative Services
Sue Epstein	Member	Associate Professor, Human Resource Management
Suzanne Orrell	Member	Director of Academic Support Services

Standard 3 Working Group - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Name	Membership	Title
Dana Gliserman-Kopans	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
John Lawless	Co-Chair	Interim Vice Provost for Academic Administration
Christine Paige	Member	Director, Instructional Design
Cynthia Bates	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
David Caso	Member	Associate Director of Engagement and Community Standards
Justin Albohn	Member	Instructional Designer
Kimberly Balko	Member	Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Allied Health
Lynette Nickleberry	Member	Assistant Professor, School of Human Services
Sarah Morehouse	Member	Librarian
William McDonald	Member	Assistant Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Standard 4 Working Group – Support of the Student Experience

Name	Membership	Title
Kim Stote	Co-Chair	Associate Dean, School of Nursing and Allied Health
Lisa D'Adamo-Weinstein	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Anita Brown	Member	Career Development Coordinator
Carl Burkhardt	Member	Director, Undergraduate Student Academic Services and Success
Dana Brown	Member	Interim EOP Director
Joshua Gaul	Member	Director, Educational and Emerging Technology
Laura Wait	Member	Program Aide, Support Staff
Michele Forte	Member	Associate Professor, School of Human Services
Seana Logsdon	Member	Senior Director for Academic Success
Thomas McElroy	Member	Director, Office of Prior Learning

Standard 5 Working Group – Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Name	Membership	Title
Desalyn De-souza	Co-Chair	Dean, School of Human Services
Julie Gedro	Co-Chair	Dean, School of Business
Antonia Jokelova	Member	Instructional Designer
Audeliz Matias	Member	Associate Professor, School of Science, Mathematics and Technology
Joanne Levine	Member	Associate Professor, School of Human Services
Linda Jones	Member	Associate Professor, School of Science, Mathematics and Technology
Sandra Winn	Member	Faculty Associate for Outcomes Assessment
Shantih Clemans	Member	Director, Center for Mentoring, Learning and Academic Innovation
Tina Wagle	Member	Professor, School for Graduate Studies

Standard 6 Working Group – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Name	Membership	Title
Duncan RyanMann	Co-Chair	Professor, School of Business
Rosalyn Rufer	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School for Graduate Studies
Christopher Whann	Member	Executive Director of Regional Operations
Joseph King	Member	Director, Institutional Effectiveness
Maureen Winney	Member	Director, Alumni Affairs and Student Relations
Michelle Fountaine	Member	Director, Financial Aid
Nathan Whitley-Grassi	Member	Assistant Director for Educational Technologies
Roselyn Dow	Member	Associate Professor, School of Business

Standard 7 Working Group – Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Name	Membership	Title
Tai Arnold	Co-Chair	Interim Vice Provost for Student Success
Thalia MacMillan	Co-Chair	Associate Professor, School of Human Services
Alan Mandell	Member	College Professor of Adult Learning and Mentoring
Dongho Kim	Member	Associate Professor, School of Business
Himanee Gupta-Carlson	Member	Associate Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Katherine Dorsey	Member	Senior Institutional Research Specialist
Nicola Allain	Member	Dean, School of Arts and Humanities
Nikki Shrimpton	Member	Interim Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Toby Tobrocke	Member	Director of Development

Editing Group

Name	Membership	Title
Ian Reifowitz	Co-Chair	Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
Diana Centanni	Co-Chair	Academic Advisor, School of Business
Alice Franke	Member	Student Information Center Representative
Allison Moreland	Member	Instructional Designer
Darlene Hapka	Member	Specialist for Academic Support
Jennifer Nettleton	Member	Coordinator of Curriculum and Instructional Design, School of Nursing and Allied Health
Kathryn Usher	Member	Project Coordinator
Thomas Kerr	Member	Enrollment Specialist
Mindy Kronenberg	Member	Professor, School of Arts and Humanities

Hospitality Group

Name	Membership	Title
Christopher Whann	Co-Chair	Executive Director of Regional Operations
Nan Travers	Co-Chair	Director of Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning
Kelli Scarlett	Member	Lecturer
Lisa Johnson	Member	Project Coordinator, Administration
Sophia Mavrogiannis	Member	Director of Academic Support
Tanya Scime	Member	Talent Management Associate

Compliance Group

Name	Membership	Title
Eileen McDonnell	Co-Chair	Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning
Sadie Ross	Co-Chair	Director of Compliance and Environmental Sustainability
Anjeanette Emeka	Member	Director of Academic Review
Ashley Mason	Member	Assistant Director, Student Success Initiatives
Bernard Smith	Member	Director of Academic Review
Bonnie Farrell	Member	Instructional Designer
Brett Sherman	Member	Director of Academic Support
David Mathis	Member	Lecturer
Leslie Ellis	Member	Director of Academic Review

Evidence Inventory Group

Name	Membership	Title
Jane Greiner	Chair	Interim Assistant Direct of Instructional Design
JoAnn Kingsley	Member	Lecturer, School of Human Services
Sarah Hull	Member	Librarian

Communications Group

Name	Membership	Title
David Puskas	Chair	Director of Academic Review
Amanda Mickel	Member	Administrative Assistant 2
Duncan RyanMann	Member	Professor, School of Business
Eric Strattman	Member	Academic Projects Specialist
Helen Edelman	Member	Web Writer



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