

# **ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN 2010 - 2015**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of Academic Affairs greatly appreciates the effort of the Academic Leadership Team for their work on this document.

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In addition, we greatly appreciate and acknowledge the input and insight provided by the faculty of SUNY Orange, and the assistance of Christine Work and the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research.





The Office of Academic Affairs would like to thank the SUNY Orange Board of Trustees and the Office of the President for their continued support of our academic mission.

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# INTRODUCTION

At Orange County Community College it is our mission to provide the opportunities and to create the enthusiasm that fosters a life-long commitment to learning. It is equally our purpose to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to be effective and productive members of the workforce. As we are presented with the challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century has laid before us, it is obvious that the above goals cannot be thought of as separate or incompatible. As a result, the Academic Master Plan that follows is a guide that realistically attempts to blend these primary goals and offer a roadmap towards directing and managing the many important academic decisions that lie ahead. As the challenges that confront us change, however, it is important to remember that this is not a fixed document. Rather, the goals and objectives of this plan must remain open to improvement or alteration as we respond to internal and external challenges and opportunities. To that end, the Academic Master Plan is a fluid document, requiring regular review, update and change.

## History and Context

The 2010-2015 Academic Master Plan presented here is the second such effort towards comprehensive academic planning at Orange County Community College. The first Academic Master Plan (2005-2010) followed a period of major change and reorganization at the College. Under a new President, the institution, in 2004, put forth a new, comprehensive strategic plan *to guide the College in the improvement of educational opportunity for all citizens of Orange County*.

Subsequently, through the efforts of faculty, department chairs, and Academic Affairs, the first Academic Master Plan was developed to chart clear directions in academic planning. The initial Academic Master Plan centered around five major themes: Technology, Curriculum Change / Program Design, Professional Development, Collaboration and Partnerships, and Student Support. Beginning with academic year 2005-2006, Academic Affairs instituted end-of-year departmental and unit reports as a method of reporting on progress made, reporting on changes within units in AMP categories, and identification of trends and plans. This system of reporting has resulted in a consistent system of keeping the emphasis on identified themes and allowing us to approach our academic work as a continuum rather than in a static state.

Since the inception of the initial Strategic Plan and Academic Master Plan, much has changed, however. Enrollment growth spurred by economic recession, changes in student population, program review and assessment findings, and the expansion of the College to include a new branch campus have necessitated reassessment and, in some cases, new approaches in our efforts to meet the needs of our students.

As a result, in 2009, following an extensive review, the College's Strategic Plan was revised to include two new initiatives – sustainability and accessibility - and to *define those activities that the College would employ over a five-year period to improve educational*

*quality and support efficient institutional growth.* In 2009, the Board of Trustees adopted the following priorities:

### **2009-2014 SUNY Orange Strategic Plan**

- **Priority I**  
Refine and strengthen the College's Academic Master Plan. Implementation of the Academic Master Plan will be supported by a Facilities Plan, a Technology Plan, a Resource Development Plan, and an Enrollment Management Plan.
- **Priority II**  
Increase effectiveness of planning and resource allocation to allow for data- and research-driven decision-making regarding College operations and programming by:
  - a. Expanding scope of responsibility and authority of the Planning Committee
  - b. Improving the collection, usefulness and availability of planning data
  - c. Developing and integrating into the operating life of the College the recommendations made by the Middle States Association's Commission on Higher Education.
- **Priority III**  
Provide adequate resources to allow the College to realize its strategic goals.
- **Priority IV**  
Develop and implement a College-wide Sustainability Plan.
- **Priority V**  
Expand and enhance programs, services and operations to ensure the College is accessible to all members of an increasingly diverse community.

The Orange County Community College Academic Master Plan, as presented here, outlines the goals, objectives and priorities necessary for the Academic Affairs component of Orange County Community College to contribute to meeting the goals put forth by the President and the Board of Trustees in the current Strategic Plan. In addition, the document that follows works to support the academic mission of the College.

### **Academic Mission Statement and Programs**

The academic mission of Orange County Community College, in the spirit of the College's vision, mission and values, is to contribute to the current and future vitality of the community we serve by providing quality higher education opportunities that meet the demands of our diverse student population. To that end, Orange County Community College will provide rigorous programs including:

## **TRANSFER PROGRAMS – LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCE**

- **Associate in Arts (A.A.) and Associate in Science (A.S.) Degrees**

The Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees prepare students for transfer to baccalaureate programs. The A.A. degree program provides for study in the traditional humanities and social science disciplines and is the basis for pursuing careers such as law, social work, psychology, personnel management, and government services. The A.S. degree programs provide for study in mathematics, natural science, and physical science and is the basis for pursuing careers such as scientific research, engineering, teaching, and business administration.

## **CAREER PROGRAMS**

- **Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degrees**

The Associate in Applied Science degree programs provide two years of college-level studies with emphasis on developing technical and professional competence for entry in a specific career.

## **CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

- The certificate programs provide the opportunity for students to develop job entry skills at the collegiate level. People who are currently employed but seeking to change careers find that the accelerated format of these programs permit completion of study in one year or less.

In addition, the College offers, through our Office of Educational Partnerships, a wide variety of programs that provide opportunity and access to the college experience. Furthermore, it is the goal of Academic Affairs to develop and sustain a shared commitment to ongoing intellectual growth, creativity, and curiosity within the Orange County community and to create opportunities that support life-long learning.

## **Orange County Community College Student Profile**

As noted in the first inception of the College's Academic Master Plan, the community college student of today comes from a diverse array of racial/ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Equally as important is the fact that they arrive with varied levels of preparedness. Thus, while today's student brings great diversity and vitality to the Orange County Community College campus, they are also placing significant new demands and expectations on the institution as a whole. The following is a profile of Orange County Community College as an institution and a snapshot of the students being served.

- ***Institution*** – Orange County Community College enrolls approximately 7,000 credit students of which 57% are female and 42% are male. Diversity matches closely with the overall population of Orange County, including: 67% White, 16% Hispanic

and 12% Black. Approximately 97% of Orange County Community College students come from New York and 83% are Orange County residents.

- ***Student Population*** – The age range of the Orange County Community College student varies. More than three-quarter of our students (77%) are under the age of twenty-five. Approximately 12% are between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four, while the remaining 10% fall between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-four. 25% of our students are registered as first time college students, 46% are continuing students, 11% are returning, 5.5% are transfer students, and the remaining 12% are enrolled in our Community College in the High School program.

21% of degree seeking students at Orange County Community College are enrolled in AAS programs with 22% enrolled in the AA degree program and 36% in an AS program. Many students are employed part-time or full-time, with previous data suggesting the average student spends 26 hours per week working, 12 hours per week in the classroom and 6 hours per week doing study assignments outside of class. With the above noted, and recognizing that graduation is not necessarily the specific goal of all students who attend Orange County Community College, current graduation rates for Orange County Community College, according to the National Student Clearing House are: 7% graduate in two years, 15% in three years and 34% in four years. Additionally, data indicates that 34% of those students graduating at the conclusion of AY 2008-2009 transferred to another institution.

- ***Student Preparedness*** – Today approximately 65% of all first time students entering Orange County Community College place into at least one Developmental course. This is an increase of 15% over five years ago when the first Academic Master Plan was developed. This is an alarming trend and one that shows no signs of slowing.

Such a trend, however, is not limited only to students who place in developmental courses. Under-preparedness impacts a wide variety of students, including those who place directly into college courses and who struggle due to inaccurate perceptions and expectations of the college environment, lack of social skills, maturity levels, family problems and work obligations.

As a result, the lack of student preparedness will continue to have a major impact on course offerings, staffing and support services and will, increasingly, require the development of collaborative strategies and initiatives between Academic Affairs and Student Services, as well as with all secondary schools in Orange County.

### **Academic Master Plan Themes**

In an effort to fulfill our academic mission and to meet the intent of Priority I of the Strategic Master Plan, the Office of Academic Affairs began, in the Fall of 2009, to review and assess the current status of academic offerings at Orange County Community College,

the issues and challenges that confront us – both internally and externally, and the changing nature of our student body. As a result of that assessment, eight specific themes were developed as the centerpiece for future academic planning. These themes were arrived at through discussions with and within the academic departments and divisions. While each theme is listed below individually, it is important to recognize that they do not stand alone and are interconnected in our efforts to provide students with the academic opportunities they may require to meet their individual goals. In addition, each theme is specifically designed to align with the College’s strategic plan, as well as the SUNY-wide strategic plan.

➤ **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

- ❖ Maintaining currency
- ❖ Responding to industry standards
- ❖ Establishing a baseline of sustainability offerings
- ❖ Identifying and prioritizing sustainability initiatives
- ❖ Fostering an atmosphere of adaptation and openness to change
- ❖ Identifying new and emerging career and transfer opportunities and develop, where practical, corresponding curricula
- ❖ Using the campus as a laboratory

➤ **STUDENTS**

- ❖ Advising
- ❖ Extracurricular activities
- ❖ Learning Assistance initiatives
- ❖ Library support
- ❖ Retentions initiatives

➤ **UNDER-PREPARED STUDENTS**

- ❖ Dealing with increasing numbers while maintaining standards
- ❖ Fostering proven initiatives (Block schedules, Learning Communities, etc.)
- ❖ Clear communication between disciplines re: expectations and abilities of students
- ❖ Expanding support for under-represented and at risk students

➤ **TECHNOLOGY**

- ❖ Develop regular replacement plans
- ❖ Ensure instruction meets industry standards
- ❖ Provide Angel Shells for course utilization

➤ **FACILITIES**

- ❖ Equipment (establish a baseline and a regular replacement plan)
- ❖ Furniture/furnishing (establish a baseline and a regular replacement plan)
- ❖ Space limitations -
  - instructional space
  - storage space
  - office space

- recognition that new buildings on campus will have major impact on programs

➤ **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ❖ Academic technology training
- ❖ Using Center for Teaching and Learning to address needs identified in the Academic Master Plan
- ❖ Fostering an atmosphere of collaboration (e.g. Interdisciplinary endeavors)
- ❖ Adjunct and new faculty mentoring and support

➤ **ACCESSIBILITY OF OFFERINGS**

- ❖ Web-enhancement and hybrid opportunities
- ❖ Non-traditional offerings (e.g. block schedules, accelerated courses, late start, etc.)
- ❖ Information literacy infused throughout academic experiences (also writing and critical thinking skills)

➤ **COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS**

- ❖ Interdisciplinary collaborations
- ❖ Strengthen and augment internship opportunities and service learning opportunities
- ❖ SUNY transferability
- ❖ Articulation agreements
- ❖ K-16 initiatives, including Community College in the High School
- ❖ AA and Student Services working together on initiatives
- ❖ Enhance connections and bridges between Academic Affairs and CAPE
- ❖ Enhance connections with local industries

As noted at the outset, the Orange County Community College Academic Master Plan endeavors to provide the framework for decision making within the academic area of the College and to serve as a guide to resource allocation in the College's academic areas. Additionally, and in keeping with the intent of Priority I of the College's Strategic Plan, the Academic Master Plan offers guidance to other units of the College (Facilities, Enrollment Management, and Technology) as they develop their own plans in support of this document.

## **Where We Are Heading**

The academic challenges over the next five years are great. As we continue to implement plans for the branch campus in Newburgh and plan for a revitalizing of the Middletown campus, focus must remain on not only maintaining high academic standards but on developing and adjusting academic programs that will meet the needs of students as we begin the second decade of the twenty-first century. The themes addressed by this Academic Master Plan are an effort to place a spotlight on those areas that will demand our constant attention as we move forward as an academic institution. Through assessment, program review and the accreditation process, ongoing reviews and adjustments must



continue to be made if we seek to remain relevant and vital. Where necessary, the academic leadership, along with the faculty, must have the vision and the courage to effect change where and when needed. Our students, especially in their under-preparedness, offer challenges to the institution on a scale that we have not previously faced. As a result, old ways and practices will not necessarily suffice as effective responses to the issues currently before us.

With the above noted, successful students are made in the classroom and not in planning documents. Their success is tied to the effectiveness of the instruction they receive. To that end, this institution will only thrive and prosper as long as planning documents such as this aid classroom effectiveness and provide the tools and the strategies that meaningfully support faculty in their efforts to educate our students. To that end, and as noted previously, this document must be viewed as a roadmap subject to change. And, while it offers our best thinking on where this institution needs to move academically, we should not be so shortsighted to assume that new ideas and innovation won't challenge the thinking presented here. For, unless we are open to change, we do a great disservice to those in our classrooms seeking what we promise – a quality education that enables each and every student to achieve their goals.