Suffolk
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL

Thursday, December 12, 2024
Virtual Meeting (Teams)

MINUTES

Members in attendance:

Mary Lou Araneo	Isaac Oddoye
Trudy Christ	Dr. Kathryn O'Donoghue
Nina Fielding	Dr. Mary Reese
Daphne Gordon	Dr. Tat Sang So
Kaliah Greene	Christina Vargas
Lisa Hamilton	Dr. Scott Votke
Heidi Kiely	Carol Wickliffe-Campbell
Theodore Koukounas	Dr. Helen Wittmann
Dr. Elizabeth McCormick	Dr. Joshua Wolfson
Fabio Montella	Dr. Yu Zhang

The meeting was called to order at 3:50 p.m.

Prof. Koukounas welcomed everyone to the last SPC meeting of the semester, mentioning that there were no new members and highlighting the agenda, which included a continuation of the discussion on the enrollment cliff. Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Dr. Helen Wittmann, with a second from Christina Vargas.

Enrollment Update
Fall 2023: VP Greene provided a brief update on fall 2024 enrollment, noting that as of December 2, 2024, the unduplicated headcount was 20,539, 2% below the fall 2024 enrollment goal of 20,983. As compared to fall 2023, the college is trending flat. In addition to students in reported in census, she highlighted areas of increase in credit and non-credit ESL, continuing education, and workforce development.

- **Credit and Non-Credit ESL:** increase in both credit and non-credit ESL enrollments, with a fall 2024 unduplicated headcount of 2,203 students, representing a 5.7% increase, as compared to fall 2023.
- **Continuing Education:** decrease of 3.0% in unduplicated headcount, as compared to fall 2023 (difference of 43 students).

- **Workforce Development**: a decrease in workforce development enrollments, primarily due to some contracts not being renewed (difference of 32 students). AVP/Chief of Staff Wickliffe-Campbell noted that the decline in workforce development was due to a key person being on leave, and contracts are now coming in again. However, there was an increase in enrollments for solar panel and technology programs.
- **Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP):** Dr. Gordon and AVP/COS Wickliffe Campbell discussed the EAP program including the entrepreneurship training and Google professional certificates which are helping to increase course registrations. EAP received two grants to implement the programs and the following was noted:
  - **Winter 2 Entrepreneurship Training:** included courses offered in both English and Spanish. The program was expanded to three sessions in the summer and two in the fall.
  - **Google Certificates:** mentioned the offering of Google professional certificates, which provide workforce training and credentials. These certificates can lead to college credit or entry-level positions in technology fields.
  - **Webinars and Courses:** noted that the college offers business development webinars every Thursday evening and business training courses on Saturdays, significantly increasing their offerings over the past two years.

Winter 2025 and Spring 2025 Enrollment: as of December 2, 2024, winter enrollment was at 1,865 students, with a goal of 1,605. Spring enrollment was trending 8% above the previous year, with a goal of 15,294 students.

Enrollment Cliff Discussion
VP Greene continued the discussion started at October's SPC meeting regarding the enrollment cliff projected to begin in 2025. She explained the concept of the enrollment cliff, highlighting the projected steady decline in high school graduates and its impact on higher education, particularly in the Northeast. It was noted that New York State is expected to experience a more severe decline in high school graduates compared to other regions. She cited a projection of a 27% decrease in high school enrollment in New York public schools between 2023 and 2041.
- **Demographic Changes:** demographic changes expected in high school graduates, including an increase in Hispanic and multiracial students, while the number of white and Black students is projected to decrease.
- **Institutional Response:** emphasized the need for institutions to have real conversations about what they can control and how to adapt to these changes. VP Greene mentioned the importance of understanding local demographics.
- **Economic Factors:** Dr. Yu Zhang raised a question about whether economic factors like unemployment rates were considered in the projections. Kaliah responded that the report focused more on migration patterns and public-school enrollment, but acknowledged that economic factor might play a role as well.

Retention Data Analysis: VP Greene presented retention data, showing an increase in retention rates for first-time full-time students from fall 2021 to fall 2023. In reviewing the college's Operational Plans from the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, she noted the college's various institutional efforts centered on retention and persistence may have played a role in the increases. These efforts included increased academic supports, financial

aid support, implementation of early alerts, retention and persistence workshops, and initiatives focused on equity and inclusion.

- o **Financial Aid Impact:** VPs Greene and Gorton discussed the impact of financial policies, including the use of HEERF funds to help students with outstanding balances and the ongoing initiative to prevent de-scheduling students with balances under $600. VP Araneo also noted the Foundation's assistance in deploying financial assistance from the hardship fund.
- o **Retention by Demographics:** VP Greene highlighted first-time, full-time retention rates by race and ethnicity, noting that Hispanic/Latino students had retention rates close to their White counterparts, while black/African American students still faced retention challenges.
- o **Retention Targets:** VP Greene discussed the need to set retention targets and mentioned that the college's current retention rate for first-time full-time and part-time students is 58.7%. She emphasized the importance of setting realistic and achievable targets.
- **Retention Factors:** Based on a number of research studies on retention, including Tinto, VP Greene outlined five factors influencing retention: financial burden, academic preparation, faculty engagement, social interaction, and mental health. She emphasized the need for a holistic approach to improve retention.

Three break out groups were formed to discuss possible institutional strategies for improving retention. Key points included bridging the gap between high school and college expectations, enhancing financial literacy for students and parents, implementing a systematic early alert system college-wide to identify and support at-risk students, and leveraging successful programs like ASAP. VP Greene requested that groups send her their full notes via e-mail.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.